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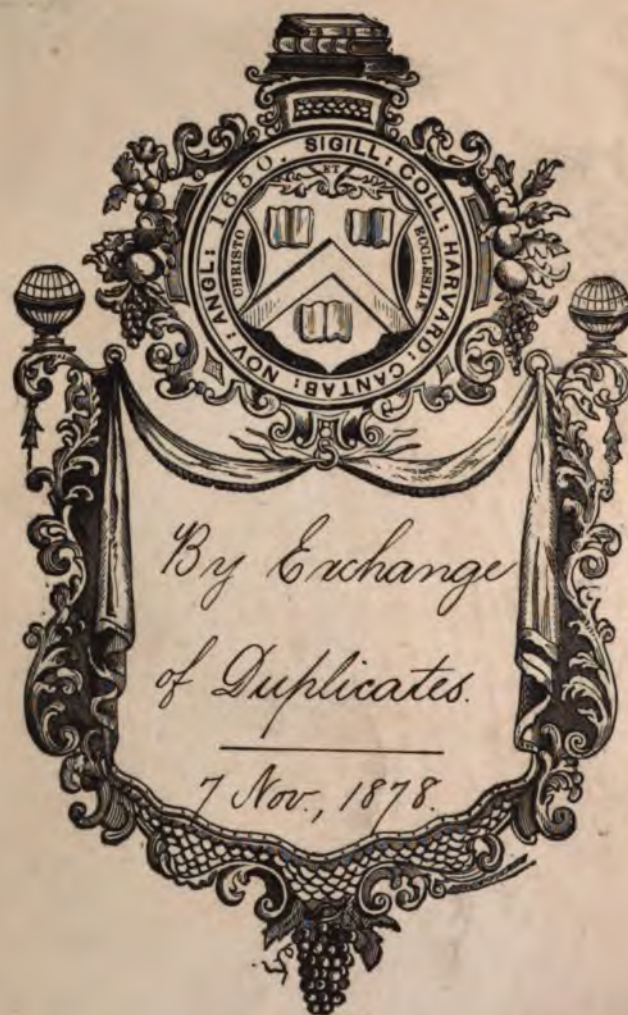
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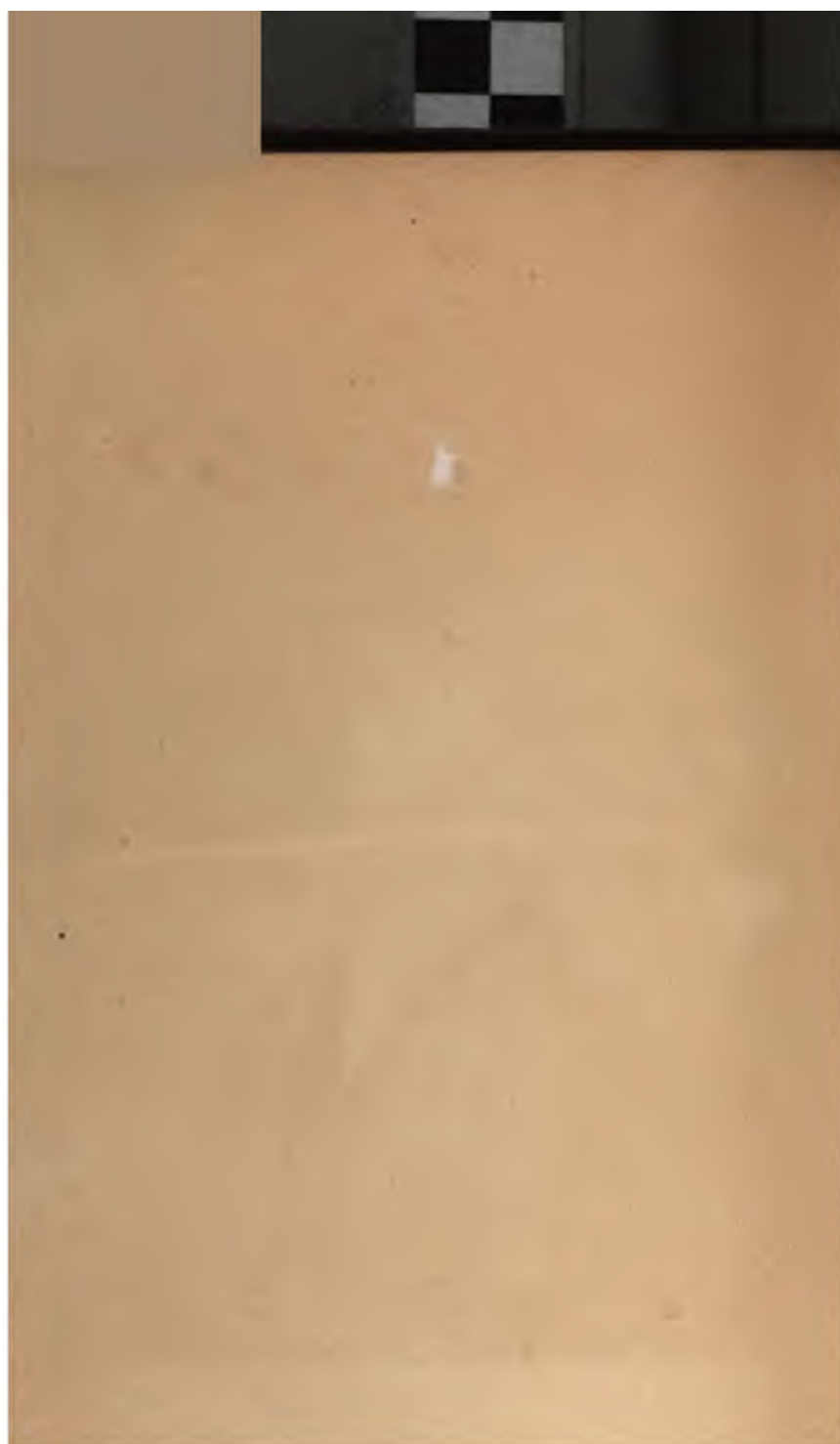
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James Richards

17. 11. 1862 New York

LECTURES

ON

MENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

BY

JAMES RICHARDS, D.D.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT
ALBANY, NEW YORK.

WITH A

SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,

BY

SAMUEL H. GRIDLEY,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, WATERLOO, NEW YORK.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY M. W. DODD,

Irish Church Chapel, opposite City Hall.

1846.



M. W. Dodd, New York

©

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## P R E F A C E .

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SOMETHING, it is supposed, should be said by way of introducing the following pages to the attention of the reader. In the first place, it perhaps ought to be stated, that however desirable it may be that some memorial of the Life and Character of Dr. Richards should be preserved, it is quite evident that nothing in the shape of biography was contemplated on his part. He kept no journal of his religious exercises, or of the important events of his life; and his written allusions to his early history, made in later years, are, for the most part, incidental in their character. A single scrap found among his papers, containing a few dates relating to change of place, and reaching as far as to the time of his going to Auburn, is the only document put into the hands of the compiler, which seems to have been written with a *design* to perpetuate the remembrance of anything connected with his history. It is also proper to state, that of the benefit of his written correspondence, beyond the pale of his own family, the writer has been able to avail himself only in the most sparing manner. Other, therefore, have been the sources from which information has been mainly derived in the preparation of the Biographical Sketch. The recollections of early friends (including the surviving brothers and sisters of Dr. Richards); church records; testimony of his parishioners when a pastor, and of his early associates in the Gospel ministry; manuals of the churches of which he was pastor; communications, written and verbal, from his colleagues in the Seminary at Auburn, and from alumni of the Seminary; the testimony of his own bereaved family; his correspondence with his children during the



last thirty years of his life, and the personal knowledge of the writer—these are the sources on which reliance has been placed. The compiler has taken great pains to furnish himself with *facts*, and has been careful to introduce nothing *as* fact, which has not seemed to be well sustained. He has visited the spot where the subject of his sketch was born, and passed the days of his childhood—conversed with his surviving brethren and sisters—handled the church record in which his name was written when first entering into covenant with God and his people, and entered the dwelling and surveyed the premises where he prosecuted, in part, his preparations for the Gospel ministry.

The Lectures found in this volume, are published under the general direction of the three sons of Dr. Richards, though under the more immediate supervision of the youngest son, the Rev. James Richards, of Pen Yan, New York. They are now given to the press, in pursuance of earnest and repeated solicitations from ministers and others, and especially from the alumni of the Seminary, for whose benefit they were originally prepared. Two of them, namely, lectures “On the Prayer of Faith,” were published several years since by request of the students of the institution, and the last, “On Ability and Inability,” was published as a sermon, while the author was a pastor. It is associated with the Lectures, and therefore receives the family name. It is not wholly unworthy of the company in which it is found, though its relative position in the volume, through mistake, has failed to be what its topics might justly claim.

A short time previous to his death, Dr. Richards, in conference with his son, expressed a willingness that his lectures “On the Will,” together with a few others, should be published if his friends desired. Had he lived to supervise what has now been done, it is quite probable that he would have made the volume, in some respects, different from what it is. Some of his phraseology might have been thrown into a more popular form, and other and more important changes have been made. It may be proper to state, that some fault may easily be found with the

PREFACE.

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use of some verbal expressions, especially in the lectures "On Native Depravity;" but in extenuation, it may be remarked, that if words are there found which are not authorized by Webster, they are, at least, easily understood; and the author is entitled to the credit of "giving the trumpet a certain sound." The plan of the lecture "On the Extent of the Atonement," *as it existed in the author's mind*, is not finished, inasmuch as it aimed at the discussion of two additional points, mentioned in the manuscript, which was omitted for the want of time, and which, though reserved for another opportunity, has not been found. The lecture, however, *as published*, is finished; or discusses, at length, the points it proposes.

As a whole, these lectures may be regarded as the result of the author's maturest reflections and severest study; and they are now sent forth into the world with the belief that however they may "provoke unto love," in the form of review or criticism, they will nevertheless impart interest and profit to those who admire manly discussion, or have a taste for the character of reading which they are intended to furnish.

As to the character of the "sketch," the writer would use a more careful form of speech. The work has been hurried to the press by circumstances which he could not control; and a part of the Biography has been written amid other responsibilities of the most urgent and exciting character.

It may be thought strange that the writer has dealt so *largely* in extracts, and so *sparingly* in entire letters, but his apology is two-fold. (1.) The space designed to be occupied by the Biography was too limited to allow the publishing of many entire letters; and, (2,) The writer is honestly opposed to giving much space to the mere introductions, or farewells, or irrelevant details of letters, in a work of this kind. If letters furnish what will aid the Biographer in drawing the character of his subject, or what will serve as links in the chain of his history, so far they may be used with great advantage; but beyond this they are, in our judgment, of doubtful utility. The writer would state in this connection, however, that he has received



several letters, from his fathers and brethren in the ministry, from which he has extracted, and which would have been published entire had our space allowed. These brethren have our grateful acknowledgments for the *facts* which they have communicated, and also for the aid furnished to the writer in confirming his own impressions of the character he has attempted to sketch, and thereby rendering him the more confident in giving those impressions to the world. From all, or nearly all, extracts are given. We humbly hope that our attempt to draw the character of Dr. Richards will not be found an entire failure. If those who knew him well shall recognize, in any good measure, the noble original—if the bereaved widow and the fatherless shall be satisfied—and if the youthful ministry of our land shall be induced to covet more earnestly the fallen mantle of the “venerated dead,” then good has been done—good to which, under God, our lamented father contributed, both in furnishing the character drawn, and in his influence upon the writer—a son of the AUBURN SEMINARY.

*Waterloo, 7th May, 1846.*





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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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### CHAPTER I.

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#### FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS LICENSE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

**SAMUEL RICHARDS**, a youth of eighteen years, came to this country from Wales, in the reign of Queen Anne. He served, for a time, in the British service in Canada against the French, and afterwards went to Connecticut, and settled in Middlesex parish, near Stamford in that State. In the line of his descendants, **JAMES RICHARDS**, the subject of the following sketch, was of the fourth generation, being the son of James, who was the son of James, who was the son of Samuel. He was born in New Canaan, Connecticut, October 29, 1767; and was the eldest of nine children, four of whom—two sons and two daughters—yet remain. His father was a farmer, a man of good sense, and esteemed for his social and Christian virtues. His mother, **RUTH HANFORD**, was “a mother in Israel.” She was a woman of vigorous intellect, of consistent piety, and of uncompromising faithfulness in all matters of social duty. As a mother, she partook largely of the spirit of the age in which she lived. It was a day of household subjection. Children

loved their parents not less, and feared them much more than at the present time. Such a child was James Richards. He learned obedience to his parents. He was accustomed to say, *that his mother governed her family with her eye and fore-finger.* He cherished her memory with great affection, and regarded his own success and usefulness in the world as owing much, under God, to her pious counsels, and wise administration of domestic law.

In his early childhood and youth he was subject to much bodily weakness. Severe physical effort he was not able to endure; and even mental application, when indulged except in a very moderate measure, seemed too much for his frail body. His fondness for books, however, together with his facility of acquiring knowledge, and his native perseverance, gave him an advantage over his equals in age, in point of mental acquirement, which furnished an offset to their physical superiority. He was accustomed to accomplish what he undertook, if within the range of his ability. When about five years old, at the instance of his teacher, he committed the second chapter of the second book of Samuel, during the time from Saturday evening to Monday morning. In bringing this difficult chapter, consisting of 32 verses, under the control of his memory, he studied it by day, and repeated it in his bed during the night. His brother, now residing in the city of New York, says: "My mother often pointed those of us that were younger to the early achievements of our brother James, as an encouragement to our efforts in the early pursuit of knowledge." His fondness for study and mental activity, may also be inferred from the fact that he taught a common district school when but thirteen years of age, and with so much success as to secure him the same position during the succeeding winter.

These early efforts as a teacher seem to have revived a desire previously cherished, to secure a public educa-

tion. In alluding to them in after life, he says: "They gave an impulse to my faculties." They awakened anxiety for knowledge, by investing him with the responsibility of imparting it to others. His father, however, was not prepared to indulge him with any means of mental acquisition beyond those which were furnished by the common district school; and, therefore, the idea of a public education was suspended, if not abandoned.

Yet it was his purpose to do something. "At the close of his second term in teaching," says his sister, "and when about fifteen years of age, he said to his parents, 'It is time for me to turn my attention to some calling for life.' His father gave him leave to seek such useful trade as would suit his feelings. He immediately made his preparations to go. He went, not knowing where he should stop; and my mother wept as he took his leave."

In pursuance of his object, he first went to Newtown, a place twenty-five miles distant from New Canaan, and engaged as an apprentice in the business of cabinet and chair making, together with house painting. Here he was soon taken sick, and returned to his father's house to remain several months. Subsequently he went to Danbury, and lastly to Stamford, where his labors as a mechanic were brought to a close. He often spoke of spending also a short time in the city of New York, in a cabinet shop in that city, and especially of the dangers that beset his path in that great and guilty metropolis.

When eight years old, he was the subject of marked religious impressions; and at the age of eleven some of his friends, for a time, indulged the hope that he had passed from death unto life. These religious promises, however, proved but the "morning cloud and early dew," which soon disappear. But in 1786, when in the nineteenth year of his age, the Gospel came to his soul as the "power of God unto salvation." The circum-

stances of his conversion, as gathered from the testimony of a surviving brother, were substantially as follows. A large number of youth in Stamford were assembled to pass the evening in youthful merriment and pleasure. To augment the glee of the occasion, young Richards, with some others, entered the assembly in disguise, and proceeded to other acts of unaccustomed levity. But what was meant for *mirth* became the occasion of *conviction of sin*. His soul was filled with arrows from the quiver of the Almighty, and his wounds could not be healed nor peace restored until application was made to the Physician in Gilead. He remained several days in great distress; until at length, in connection with reading the thirty-eighth Psalm by Watts, the "burden" which he could not "bear" was removed by a foreign hand, and the "guilt" which he could not "atone" was cleansed by the blood of Christ. (See Psalm 38.)

In speaking of his feelings previous to his conversion, and in connection with it, he once said in substance as follows, to one of his classes in the lecture-room in the Theological Seminary at Auburn:

"I had long cherished the idea that I could be converted when I pleased, that faith preceded conversion, and that by exercising it I should lay God under obligation to give me a new heart. The time for the experiment at last came. My sins found me out, and I attempted to believe according to my cherished notions of faith, and thus induce God to give me the grace of regeneration. For several days I struggled, and struggled in vain. I began to see my own impotency, and consequently my dependence on the sovereign interposition of God; and the more I saw, the more I hated. I became alarmed in view of my enmity, and began to feel that I had passed beyond my day of grace, and was rapidly sinking to hell. But at length my soul melted, and the method of salvation I had hated became my joy and my song." In accordance with the foregoing, he was accustomed more familiarly to say, "I was *born* an Arminian, and *lived* an Arminian; but obstinate freewiller as I was, at length, by sovereign power and

mercy, I was brought to *lick the dust of God's footstool*, and accept of salvation *by grace*."

His hopeful conversion was soon followed by an open confession of Christ, not only in the act of entering into covenant with the Church, but in his daily conversation and intercourse with the world. He united with the Congregational church in Stamford on the 17th September, 1786. His conversion and subsequent zeal in the service of God created much sensation among the people. It was a day when revivals were few—and when religion, especially among the young, was suffering general neglect. Even many good men, in their remembrance of the extravagances of Davenport and others, and the evils connected with them, and dreading the return to Zion of such calamities, were themselves almost suspicious of any unwonted exhibition of zeal in the promotion of religion. Hence, when the subject of this sketch, in the days of his first love to Christ, began to speak in meetings for conference and prayer, and tell what Christ had done for him, occasion was taken for much remark. Some doubted; some were anxious as to whereunto these things would grow; others, like the mother of Jesus, "kept all these sayings in" their hearts.

He had no sooner become satisfied of his acceptance with God through Christ, than a desire for the "office of a bishop" sprung up in his soul; and this desire, under the advice of his pastor and other Christian friends, soon grew into a purpose to prepare himself for that "good work."

His master, to whom he was indented, convinced that he would not pursue his trade beyond the period of his indenture, should he be held to its fulfillment, and knowing his desire to enter upon a course of study, kindly released him from his obligations. His return to New

Canaan with a new character, and a new purpose for life, subjected him to prejudice and embarrassment, which often fall to the lot "of a prophet in his own country." Some, indeed, blessed God for the change; but others were unbelieving, and marveled that a young dependent mechanic, whose mother and sisters were with them, should conceive the purpose of becoming a minister of the Gospel. His coming among his "own people," however, made a favorable impression upon the minds of some, both in and out of the Church. His brother, now of Westport, Ct., says: "When James returned home I was thoughtless and careless, as most young people were at that time. But his warnings and admonitions made an impression upon my mind which I could not shake off. I have ever regarded his pious influence at that time, as the chief instrumentality in bringing me to a knowledge of Christ."

There were those, also, who welcomed him as a helper in sustaining "the things which were ready to die" in the Church of God. Weekly religious meetings, which had long been suspended, were appointed at his earnest solicitation, and aided by such gifts as God had committed to his trust. His course of study preparatory to college was commenced under the direction of the Rev. Justus Mitchel, then pastor in New Canaan. Inspired with a love of study, and a desire for "the office of a bishop"—now anticipated with all the freshness and power of his "first love"—he gave himself to his books with great zeal and energy. After the lapse of a few months, however, he was interrupted by sickness—a form of embarrassment with which he became very familiar in the progress of his studies. This attack was followed by an extreme weakness of his eyes, which deprived him of their use for several months. In this emergency he contrived to make some progress in his course of study, by availing himself of the aid of his



youngest sister, who daily read in his hearing such lessons as he might direct.

His preparations for college were completed under the instructions of Dr. Burnett, of Norwalk, to which place he was invited by two female relatives—Sarah and Phebe Comstock—who proposed to give him his board, and render him other aid according to their ability. These excellent females continued to show him favor through his course of study, and their great kindness was held in grateful remembrance.

In the autumn of 1789 he entered Yale College; but owing to his failure in availing himself of a foundation by which to meet his current expenses, he was obliged to leave at the close of the freshman year and return to his friends. From this time he abandoned the expectation of a regular and liberal course of study, and determined to make the most of such private advantages as might lie within his reach. He returned to his old friend, Dr. Burnett, of Norwalk, to enjoy again his excellent instructions, together with the kind hospitalities and aid of the female relatives to whom we have alluded.

While here, his studies were again interrupted by the invasion of dangerous and protracted sickness. He was carried to New Canaan, where for the space of several weeks his extreme weakness forbade articulation, and he seemed one of the dead rather than of the living. He regarded this illness as peculiarly profitable to his spiritual interests, and his restoration to health as one of the most striking interpositions of a gracious Providence connected with his whole life. In alluding to his recovery, he often spoke of the affectionate care of a sister next younger than himself, whom he regarded as the chief instrument, under God, of preventing his going down to the grave. This sister watched by his bedside, anticipated his wants, administered medicine, and, like Miriam, the sister of the infant Moses, waited anxiously "to wit what would

be done to" her brother. As his case became more hopeful, and his strength would permit, she bore him in her arms, or placing him in an easy chair drew him both in doors and in the open air, or indulged him in the grateful exercise of the family swing, as though he were but a child, and as if her own life were bound up in his. Faithful sister! surely thou hast not lost the reward of thine affectionate care and patient toil. After the lapse of several months his health was restored, and he returned to Norwalk and engaged in study.

In 1791 he went to Farmington and spent a few months in teaching, and also availed himself of such opportunity to pursue his studies as was consistent with other duties. From this place he went to Greenfield, where he availed himself of the tuition of Dr. Dwight, until he applied for license to preach the Gospel.

It may be proper to remark in this place, that though the subject of this sketch must have suffered loss in many respects by his interruption in a college course of study, still, to the honor of his teachers, it ought to be said that no advantages, except those of a well-regulated college, could have surpassed those which were furnished under their instruction. Their grateful pupil often spoke with much interest of the great excellence of Dr. Burnett as a teacher; and it is well known that the school on "Greenfield Hill," under Dr. Dwight, was one of "unexampled reputation." Nor did young Richards fail to make the most faithful use of the means of knowledge thus furnished. He studied with great diligence, and his attainments are sufficiently shown by the fact that in 1794, at the instance of Dr. Dwight, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the corporation of Yale College.



## CHAPTER II.

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FROM HIS LICENSE TO THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY AT MORRISTOWN.

IN 1793 he made application to the Association in the Western District of Fairfield Co., and was licensed by a Committee of that body to preach the Gospel. The Rev. Dr. Burnett, of Norwalk, with whom he had studied, claimed for his own pulpit the first sermon of his young friend and pupil, and compliance with the claim was yielded "in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling" on the part of Mr. Richards. He supplied, for a few sabbaths, the church in Wilton, a neighboring town, and then went to Ballston, New York, and preached on a short engagement. The following covenant and resolutions are found among his papers, dated at Ballston, Dec. 22, 1793 :

"I do now, in the presence of God and his holy angels, solemnly avouch the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be my God, and promise, by the help of his Holy Spirit, without which I can do nothing, to devote myself to him in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten. As the chief of sinners, I resolve to look up to God for pardon and acceptance, through the blood of his dear Son, and to rest my soul on the gracious promises of the Gospel ; determining to renounce sin in all its appearances, I resolve to consecrate my time, talents, and all that I have on earth, to the service of God, promising to make his glory the ultimate end of all my actions. It is my resolution to be more watchful and prayerful than I have hitherto been ; to see that my thoughts are employed on proper subjects, and in their proper times ; to guard against all rash and heedless words, all severe and unjustifiable remarks on the persons and character of other men ; taking heed to the door of my lips, that I offend not with my tongue.

"I resolve that I will not suffer my passions to take the place of my reason, but will subject them to the laws of God and religion. Never to be 'angry without a cause,' nor to indulge that kind of anger which is incompatible with disinterested love to my neighbor. I resolve, moreover, to be faithful in all the relative duties incumbent on me, and particularly in the discharge of the duties a Gospel minister—preaching the Word of God in all its purity and extent, and serving the Lord with all humility and patience, that by meekness, gentleness, and love unfeigned, I may win others to the Gospel of Christ.

"Remember, O my Soul, these resolutions and the vows of God which are upon thee. Thou canst not violate them without incurring the displeasure of the best of beings, the best of fathers, and the most faithful of friends; nor without injuring thy best and dearest interests. Strengthen me, O Lord, I beseech thee, and confirm the resolution of thy servant. Keep me by thy mighty power from sinning against thee, and preserve me spotless unto thy heavenly kingdom. Amen."

Soon after the date of the foregoing resolutions, Mr. Richards went to Long Island, and entered into an engagement to preach to two small congregations; one at Sag Harbor and the other at Shelter Island.

The following grateful tribute to his memory as a minister at Sag Harbor, is found in "The History of Long Island," by the Rev. N. S. Prime: "The late Rev. James Richards, D. D.—a name loved and revered throughout the Church—made some of his first essays in this place to preach the Gospel. And though he was here but a short time, his labors of love were highly appreciated by a pious few; the most of whom have already hailed him as the helper of their faith, and are now rejoicing with him in a brighter world. There was one precious saint, long since gone to her rest, whom the writer has often heard speak of the satisfaction and benefit which she derived from the labors of that youthful servant of Christ, not only in the pulpit, but at the domestic fireside; and the name of 'Richards' was music in her ears to her dying

In May, 1794, he was invited to visit the church and congregation in Morristown, N. J., as a candidate for the pastoral office ; which invitation he accepted, and agreed to visit that people at the expiration of his existing engagements. This arrangement was made under the advice of Dr. Buel, of East Hampton, and his son-in-law the Rev. Aaron Woolworth, of Bridgehampton. Dr. Buel had long been acquainted with the character of the congregation now vacant, and his own mind and that of his son-in-law were favorably impressed as to the ministerial character and promise of Mr. Richards.

In a letter written to Rev. Dr. Johnes, the old friend and pastor of the church in Morristown, while the question of the young candidate's settlement was pending, Dr. Buel uses the following language : " The man who, on a thorough acquaintance with James Richards, does not love him, cannot himself be deserving the love of any man."

He entered upon his labors in Morristown in the month of June, 1794 ; and in September following received a call to take the pastoral charge of the congregation.

In November of this year he was married to Caroline, daughter of James Cowles, of Farmington, Connecticut.

His ordination to the work of the Gospel ministry, and the consummation of his pastoral relations took place on the 1st of May, 1797, " at a stated meeting of what was then called the Presbytery of New York."

The charge now committed to the hands of Mr. Richards, was one of great responsibility. The congregation was large, comprising much intelligence, and withal afflicted with divisions of sentiment and feeling, which had grown out of their relations to a former minister—who was a colleague of Dr. Johnes. For a just view of the responsibility of the new pastor, together with the character and influence of his ministry in Morristown we

may refer the reader to the following extracts. In a letter to Lewis Condit, Esq., in which he alludes to the state of things when he took the pastoral charge of the people of Morristown, he says :

“ Nov. 26, 1840.—They [your fathers] differed greatly in opinion, and for a time were strongly opposed to each other in feeling, but they judged it best not to divide but to make sacrifices, and endeavor to harmonize. Their endeavors were successful—they were harmonized—peace and brotherly love became the order of the day ; and, with some slight exceptions, have marked the course of things in the congregation for almost half a century.”

The following extract from a letter to his youngest son now in the ministry, shows the extent of the field which he occupied, and the amount and kind of labors demanded and bestowed.

“ In this great congregation I had the sick and afflicted to visit, the dead to bury, the wandering to look after, the captious and uneasy to soothe, besides schools to catechise and lectures to preach and prayer-meetings to attend ; altogether creating a vast amount of labor, independent of regular family visitations and preparing for the pulpit. Not a little time was consumed in occasional calls upon my people and their calls upon me. The result of all this was, I was like a man in harvest—always pressed with engagements, and with more than I could fairly meet. It became necessary, therefore, to make a selection among the calls of duty, and attend to those first which were of the most urgent character, leaving others to the dubiousness of an hereafter. \* \* \* \* \*

I endeavored to derive advantage from the various occurrences of Divine Providence ; from the teachings of God’s Word, and from my constant intercourse with the most spiritual and devoted among my people. This last circumstance was not only a matter of special comfort, but of profit to my soul. I felt myself instructed and invigorated often from conversing freely with some of my plainest people on the subject of experimental religion.”

The following is from the pen of Lewis Condit, Esq., to whom we have before alluded :

*“ May, 1845.—The general character of Mr. Richard’s ministry was consistent, uniform, and worthy of imitation. He seemed to live, and at all times to act, as under the impression that his great and leading duty was to preach the Gospel of Christ—to instruct his people faithfully in its essential doctrines and truths, and persuade them to obey its precepts and imitate the life of its Divine Author. \* \* As a teacher and a pastor, he enjoyed the entire confidence, respect, and affection of his whole flock.”*

While thus living in the hearts of his people he also increased in the confidence and esteem of the Christian public. He was favorably known, both in the halls of Science, and in the judicatories of the Church of God. In the year 1801 he received the degree of Master of Arts from the corporation of the College of Princeton, in his own State, and in 1805 he was duly elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church—a position, we believe, rarely occupied by a man of thirty-seven. To these distinctions were also added others—others of more worth to the heart of a Christian pastor. Within two years from his installation, God poured out his Spirit, and more than one hundred souls bowed professedly to Jesus, and united with the Church. A second revival in 1803 and 1804, and a third in 1808, crowned his labors also with the increase that cometh from God.

The character and influence of these seasons of religious interest may be best learned from a letter written by the subject of this sketch to the Rev. Albert Barnes, and dated January 9th, 1828.

*“ During my ministry at Morristown, there were three seasons of special attention to religion, the first and last of which were the most considerable. The first was remarkable, chiefly, from this circumstance, that it came upon the congregation by surprise. None of the church members, that ever I could learn, were specially stirred up to desire or expect it. Of course, the Church appeared full of unbelief, when it was announced that the*



Lord was in the midst of us, of a truth. Even those who, from their exemplary character, might have been expected to be waiting for the consolation of Israel, were manifestly unprepared for this sovereign act of Divine mercy. But, prepared or unprepared, the windows of heaven were opened, and the spiritual rain descended, and about one hundred souls were hopefully brought into the kingdom, as the fruit and effect of this refreshing. They did not all join the church at once, but principally in the course of that and the following year.

“The second revival, in 1803, was much more local in its operations, and by no means characterized with the same power. It excited considerable attention in the congregation, and served to draw forth the prayers and exertions of Christians; but still it was confined chiefly to one or two neighborhoods.

“The third and last of these interesting seasons, I always regarded as the most precious; not because it seemed to take a wider sweep, but because, as far as it went, it appeared to be more deep and effective, and exerted a more benign influence on the church. This revival was evidently preceded by a spirit of prayer. To my latest breath, I shall remember how some of the dear people of God appeared to feel and agonize, in their supplications before the Lord, when imploring his gracious presence in the midst of us. Through the whole of the preceding winter, there had been some feeling and some expectancy in the church on this subject, occasioned, perhaps, by the revivals which had occurred, and were then occurring, in some of the neighboring congregations. But the church seemed to calculate that this good work would go from congregation to congregation, as a matter of course. When, however, they saw that the cloud of God's presence had come to our very borders, on two sides of us, and was stayed, they began to tremble, to feel their dependence, and to cry mightily unto God, that he would not utterly refuse to bless us. The blessing came, and sealed, not a few, I trust, unto the day of redemption. Between seventy and eighty were added to the church, in that and the subsequent year, who dated their conversion from this interesting period. I will only add, that on inquiring of my brethren who succeeded me in this charge, I was uniformly told that the members gathered during this revival, had been peculiarly circumspect, and very few of them subjected to any church censure.

“As to means employed, either in the commencement or progress of these revivals, I can say nothing; except that the Gospel



was preached as plainly and faithfully as I was able, and that publicly, and from house to house. Prayer-meetings, anxious-meetings, or conferences, were found to be of special service in promoting the good work."

In 1809, Mr. Richards received and accepted a call from the First Presbyterian Church in Newark, to become their pastor. The causes which led to the dissolution of the connection between him and the congregation at Morristown, were briefly these :

For several years his salary had been inadequate to the support of his family, and he had been obliged to resort to other means to meet his current expenses. Among other expedients, he had kept several boarders—an expedient which, while it answered the end designed, increased the domestic cares of the pastor, whose official responsibilities were well-nigh overwhelming. The evil was perceived, and deeply felt. Both Mr. Richards and his more intimate friends, became satisfied that such a state of things ought not to be continued. Hence it was judged best that the salary should be so increased as to sustain the pastor, independent of profits arising from a boarding establishment. A meeting was accordingly called, at which statements were made to the congregation, setting forth the revenues and expenditures of the pastor, and the urgent necessity of his receiving an increased compensation. The people, however, were not prepared for such a movement. Some were slow to see the necessity of an increase of salary, and opposed the effort ; others were wavering ; the friends of the measure, though many, were at first timid, and " touched the matter with great delicacy ;" and nothing was effectually done. One or two other meetings, called for the purpose of considering the question of augmenting the salary, came substantially to the same result. This state of things in the congregation, deeply affected the deli-

cate sensibilities of Mr. Richards. He thus alludes to it in a letter, written afterwards to his son :

“ When in the summer and fall of 1808, (the year before I went to Newark,) my people refused to unite in an augmentation of my salary, though *many* were earnestly for it, I found it grieved me, and many things connected with it mortified me and agitated me. I presently discovered that I was getting into a state of mind by no means favorable to my comfort or my usefulness. Instead, therefore, of dwelling upon the subject, and especially upon the dark side of the picture, I resolved to give myself anew to the duties of my ministry, to serve God, and his people given me in charge, with all the strength I had, and to do whatever seemed proper and meet to be done, as if no untoward event had occurred.

“ And let me say, I found great comfort in this. Though my resolution was to discharge my duty, and leave the event with God, yet I did not infer that I was not at liberty to watch the movings of Providence, and avail myself of any opportunity which should present, to change my relations, provided such change appeared to be accompanied with the indications of duty.”

In the mean time an effectual door of usefulness was opening in Newark. Dr. Griffin, the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in that city, had been invited to a professorship in the Theological Seminary at Andover, and, as was supposed, strongly recommended to his people Mr. Richards as his successor. A correspondence commenced, in which the most earnest appeals were made in behalf of the Newark congregation. To the already afflicted pastor, these appeals were occasion of new trials. Though he had supposed it right to watch the movements of Providence, and thought it possible that he might be called to yield his present relations, yet he dreaded the coming of the day when they should be sundered. His present pastoral charge was the object of his “first love.” He knew his flock. The sheep and the lambs he could call by their respective names. They also knew his voice, and had been wont to follow

him. And a people, who had called him as their spiritual watchman in his youth—who had laid aside their animosities to sustain him—who had taught their children to reverence him as a father, might well urge a strong claim to the services of his riper years.

Nor was there any attachment on the part of the people, which was not reciprocated by the pastor. In a letter to the member of the congregation, already alluded to, and written but a short time before his death, he says:

“Never was a minister more happy with his people than I with mine, during the fifteen years I spent among you. With you I was willing to live, and with you I expected to die.”

To the same, in another letter, he writes:

“I can truly say, that if there be a spot on earth to which my mind turns with more than ordinary affection, it is THAT where I was ordained to the work of the Gospel ministry, and took upon myself the obligation of the Christian pastor. I loved the people that called me to this work, and I trust I loved the work itself.”

The reasons for a change, however, seemed more and more urgent. The increase of the salary was postponed; the health of Mrs. Richards had declined; his rising family were increasingly expensive; and he began to entertain the impression that the promise of his usefulness in Morristown was diminished by the excitement which the proposal to raise the salary had created.

These considerations inclined him to give some encouragement to the congregation in Newark; and he intimated that should they extend to him a unanimous call, it would receive a careful consideration, and that he should “acquiesce in what seemed to be the leadings of God’s providence.” Such a call soon came into his hands. In anticipation of it, his congregation had succeeded in voting an increase of salary; and prior to thei



knowledge of his acceptance, they set forth their views and feelings in two formal memorials addressed to their pastor. One of these was sent from a meeting of seventy-one ladies, and presented by the hands of a committee whose names are appended to the address. It is a document which reflects honor both upon the pastor, and upon those who sent it. It reads as follows :

“ DEAR SIR :

“ Having lately been informed that you contemplate a removal from the pastoral charge of this congregation, we, the subscribers, in behalf of ourselves and the meeting of females we represent, feel ourselves constrained to express to you, in some degree, the deep regret and anxiety we experience on the occasion, in common with all classes and descriptions of persons composing this numerous society. The attachment we feel for you and your amiable family is not founded in the transient acquaintance of a day or a month. A period of fourteen years and upwards, spent in the most friendly interchange of kind offices, has gradually ripened and matured that acquaintance into a permanent and refined friendship. As the faithful shepherd and pastor of our flock, words fail us to express our veneration and esteem for you. Many of us have grown from infancy and youth into active life during your ministry here, and through the instrumentality of your public instructions, friendly admonitions and exemplary life, have been enabled, through Divine aid, to partake of the rich blessings of that Gospel which you have so faithfully preached. \* \* \* Others of us have, at the same time, been declining the steep of life, and now stand on the verge of eternity. Most of our attachments formed in youth have been rent in sunder. You have personally witnessed, in many instances, the parting scene. You have accompanied us who are widows and mothers to the grave of many a beloved husband and child. You have mingled your tears with ours, and, in the keenest moments of anguish and heart-rending grief, you have administered to us the only consolation promised in the Gospel by the widow's God. \* \* \*

“ You settled among us in the work of the ministry while we were a divided people. Happily for us these divisions no longer exist, and our attachment to you is probably much strengthened, considering you as the means of restoring harmony among us. You



yourself were in the morning of life, the season, of all others, the best adapted for forming lasting attachments. Is it to be expected that a change of circumstances, in the afternoon of life, can add much to the share of happiness which is perhaps already as considerable as usually falls to the lot of man?

“If, however, after due consideration of the solemn ties that bind you to this church, a removal may appear to you a duty, and you consider it as a mean of enlarging your own sphere of comfort and enjoyment, perhaps we ought to acquiesce in the separation, however painful it may be.

“Whether you leave us or remain with us, you may rest assured of our prayers for a blessing on your labors, and our best wishes for the happiness and prosperity of yourself and family.”

But these remonstrances, and the announcement of the vote to increase the salary of the pastor, came too late. The encouragement which had been given to another congregation, had been answered in a unanimous call. The conditions which he had suggested had been met, and painful as was the thought of parting, he was not the man to *say* and not *do*.

The foregoing is a brief outline of the circumstances under which the question of dissolving the pastoral relation came before the Presbytery of Jersey. The congregation, in parish meeting, after a painful struggle, resolved to submit the whole question to that body. When the Presbytery met at Elizabethtown, April 26, 1809, a member, then residing at Morristown, after an able and full exposition of the causes which had induced the pastor to ask leave to resign his pastoral charge, and an entire justification of the request, concluded in the following words:

“As an inhabitant of Morristown, no one has more serious reasons to regret the removal of Mr. Richards, than myself:—Yet his removal, I regard rather as the misfortune than the fault of Morristown; and his removal to Newark as an event brought about rather by the providence of God, than by the destination of man. I shall, therefore, move that the call from the people of Newark be put into his hands.”



### CHAPTER III.

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#### HIS MINISTRY AT NEWARK.

**HIS** call to Newark was received in April, 1809, and he removed his family to that place on the 17th of May following. On the 28th of the same month, Dr. Griffin preached his farewell sermon to his congregation, and the responsibilities of the pastoral charge were left with his successor. A more weighty charge or more delicate position could hardly be assumed. Dr. Griffin was then regarded as one of the most gifted and eloquent ministers in the American Church, and Newark had been favored with nearly eight years of the most vigorous and efficient portion of his pastoral life. His labors, too, had been crowned with signal success, the church having increased from two to five hundred members during his ministry. It is worthy also of notice, that he left at the close of a revival, to which, in a letter written to Mr. Richards, he thus alludes : " I was there in the harvest time, but you came in the fall of the year ;" intimating the disadvantage under which his successor entered upon his pastoral charge.

Mr. Richards felt the responsibility of his position, and resolved, under God, to make full proof of his ministry. He said to a friend, " I am resolved to ' give attendance to reading ;' I must study now if ever." He *did* study, and he also " gave himself to prayer." His purpose to magnify his office, appeared in the pulpit and in the walks of pastoral intercourse ; and the attachment of the

people grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength.

In 1811 the congregation under his care judged it expedient to become "two bands;" and, accordingly, an organization was effected under the name of the "Second Presbyterian Church and Congregation of Newark," and the Rev. Hooper Cumming was constituted the first pastor. This whole matter received both the approbation and aid of Mr. Richards; and his kind regard for the spiritual well-being of the new church may be learned from the following introduction of an address delivered by him at the time of its organization:

"The circumstances, my brethren, in which you are assembled this afternoon, are in several respects novel and interesting. After having peaceably withdrawn from your former connections, and being set apart as a distinct congregation—after erecting a house for the worship of God, and dedicating it to his service—after calling and settling a minister, who is to go in and out before you and break unto you the bread of life—you are come together to complete your religious privileges. Those of you who have heretofore been professors of religion are to organize yourselves as a church of Christ, by giving yourselves to one another and to the Lord. Here you are to recognize each other as the friends of Jesus—purchased by his blood and sanctified by his Spirit—the joint heirs with him to an eternal inheritance. How tender, how solemn, how important is the relation! By virtue of it you expect often to commune with each other at the table of the Lord; and, if you are not deceived in your hopes, to spend an eternity together in his kingdom. *Formerly*, indeed, you were the constituent members of the same church, but your circle being wider, you were less known to each other than you will hereafter be. You must now take upon you those cares and labors which, heretofore, you have shared with a much larger number. From being a *part only* of a particular church, you will now become a distinct church yourselves, and stand in the number of those golden candlesticks among whom the Divine Redeemer graciously condescends to walk. What occasion will you have to rejoice, if he will condescend to visit you—if he will crown with his special presence and blessing



the transactions of this afternoon, and henceforth dwell in your hearts by love. Many important subjects of reflection will naturally present themselves to your minds on this occasion, but I can think of none which more deservedly merits your attention, than these words: "*Let brotherly love continue.*" Hitherto you have been united in counsel, and united in affection. Let the same spirit continue in you and abound, and you have the promise that the God of love and peace shall be with you."

He farther spoke on this occasion, in a course of extempore remarks, on the subject of brotherly love—a subject, the choice of which may be regarded as the index of his earnest desire, that those who had thus gone out from his immediate pastoral care, might become a band "strong in the Lord and by the power of his might."

The subsequent history of this new organization became the occasion of showing, in a strong light, the excellent character and ministerial worth of Mr. Richards. Things which, at first, seemed hazardous to his position and usefulness, operated, in the providence of God, for his advancement. One occurrence, which we may mention, was a call extended to his illustrious predecessor the Rev. Dr. Griffin, to take the pastoral charge of the new congregation, after an absence of only six years. Perhaps in most cases, the return of a former pastor under such circumstances, and especially of the commanding talents and great worth of Dr. Griffin, would be likely to render the position of his successor somewhat unpleasant. The possibility of such an influence was deprecated by some of the people in Newark, and became the subject of frank and fraternal correspondence between Dr. Griffin and Mr. Richards, previous to the acceptance of the call. The experiment, however, was made; and for the space of six years these devoted men labored side by side, with perhaps equal honor and usefulness. Each pastor had points in which



he excelled. One, perhaps, in the "gift of tongues" and in "prophecy ; and the other in the "word of wisdom" and "discerning of spirits." One in the surpassing power of his *occasional* efforts, and the other in the uniform interest of his *ordinary* preaching ; the one in success in *gathering* the lambs into the fold, the other in *keeping* them when gathered. Both were stars of the first magnitude. One star, it may be, *differed* from the other star in glory, but so far was the glory of the one from eclipsing or obscuring the glory of the other, that the glory of each was the more glorious by the contiguity of their orbits, and the close comparative estimate to which each was subjected. And if, in this comparison, the name of Richards suffers not, where will you look to find "*the glory that excelleth.*"

While at Newark Mr. Richards received new proofs of the confidence of the Christian public. He was early elected Trustee of the College of New Jersey, and held the place until he removed from the State. In 1812, the year in which the Theological Seminary at Princeton was established, he was appointed a Director of that Institution, and served in that capacity with great acceptance while he remained in Newark. In Sept. 1814, he preached the annual sermon before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The appointment places his name among the early friends of modern missions ; and the sermon evinces enlarged views and a warm heart in the work of evangelizing the world. In 1815 he received the degree of DOCTOR OF DIVINITY from two Colleges—Union and Yale—a degree which, at that day, was an index, both of professional and general worth.

His name is also found in connection with the origin of several of the great benevolent institutions of the age. The American Bible Society, whose leaves, for thirty years, have gone forth for the healing of the nations, owes its existence, in part, to his efforts. For

several years he served as the Secretary of the Presbyterian Education Society, and perhaps no form of pious effort more powerfully excited the sympathies of his heart, or secured his more devoted labors, than the work of training indigent young men for the Gospel ministry.

While prosecuting his labors in Newark, Dr. Richards suffered a few of the productions of his pen to be published. An Address delivered at the funeral of Mrs. Sarah Cumming, wife of the Rev. Hooper Cumming, which occurred in 1812, has been publicly noticed with favor. The occasion was one of deep interest. The death of Mrs C. was occasioned at Patterson, by a fall from the rocks overhanging the Passaic, while she was viewing the scenery of that place. The excitement produced in Newark was unwonted, and the funeral one of the largest ever known in the city. The scene woke up the strong sympathies of the preacher's heart, and his address was worthy of himself and the occasion.

In 1816 several of his sermons were given to the press. Among these, the one entitled "The Sinner's Inability to come to Christ," may be regarded as a lucid and forcible exhibition of the subject, and, perhaps, this discourse may be considered as a fair specimen of the perspicuity which usually marked his expositions of Gospel truth.

As a pastor in Newark, it was the privilege of Dr. Richards to know that his labor was "not in vain in the Lord." At several distinct periods God was with his people of a truth. About the close of his first pastoral year a few souls were hopefully brought from darkness into light. In the year 1813, Zion was refreshed and salvation came to the congregation; and in 1817 the heavens dropped fatness and the skies poured down righteousness upon the people. As the fruits of this revival, 69 were added to the church in May, 54 in July,

and in all, including those who united soon after, 135 within nine months. This was emphatically the year of God's right hand, in connection with a ministry of fourteen years and a half. During the pastoral services of Dr. Richards, the church received an accession of about five hundred members—three hundred and thirty-two were added on the profession of their faith, and six young men, members of the church, were licensed to preach the Gospel.

It may also be noticed that Dr. Richards, for a considerable time previous to his taking leave of Newark, was regarded as having made extraordinary attainments in Christian theology. Young men looking to the Christian ministry availed themselves of his instructions, and studied under his direction; and those who knew him best looked to the day when God, in his providence, might point him to the more exclusive work of instructing those who were preparing to preach the Gospel.

I conclude this chapter in the words of the present Pastor of the First Presbyterian Congregation in Newark, from a discourse pronounced on the occasion of the death of Dr. Richards.

“Fifteen years he devoted to the faithful discharge of his duties as a minister of Christ with this people, and probably few men in the ministry ever more punctually, systematically, and successfully performed the duties of the sacred office.

• • • “The continued prosperity of this church, the hopeful conversion of hundreds under his ministry, the enlarged benevolence which distinguished the people of his charge, and the harmony that existed through his entire ministry, are the results and evidences of his fidelity among you.”



## CHAPTER IV.

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### HIS CONNECTION WITH THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT AUBURN.

**THE** Theological Seminary at Auburn, was established in 1819, by the Synod of Geneva, and with the sanction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. It was incorporated by a law of the State in 1820. By the Act of Incorporation the Institution was placed under the care of a Board of Trustees and a Board of Commissioners; the latter to be chosen annually by the Presbyteries recognized in the Act, and by other Presbyteries who might afterward associate with them.

In 1821 the Seminary went into operation, with three professors, and with ten or twelve students. It was a bold effort;—an effort, we doubt not, resulting from that faith which sees “light in the darkness.” Not a professorship was endowed; the Library was necessarily indifferent both as to the number and the selection of books; while the Christian community were but partially awake to the merits or the worth of such an institution. At the end of two years, the number of students had not increased, but rather diminished; and in no respects, perhaps, were the prospects of the institution materially brightened, except in the advancement of the Seminary edifice.

About this time, however, an important impulse was given to this infant school of the prophets. Arthur Tappan, Esq., of the city of New York, generously devoted the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, as a capital fund, to be used as a permanent endowment of a professorship of

Christian Theology. Never was aid more opportune than this. Hands that hung down were lifted up, and feeble knees were strengthened. The name of the author of this relief will long be held in grateful remembrance, as one of the greatest benefactors of the Auburn Seminary.

From the first, Dr. Richards was regarded by the friends of the Institution as a suitable and prominent candidate for the Theological Professorship, and accordingly received an appointment in 1820, which he saw fit to decline. At this time (1823) he was unanimously re-elected. He accepted the invitation and made immediate preparations to remove to Auburn.

The following extracts reveal his feelings on leaving Newark, and going to his new field of labor. From Albany he writes to his daughter:

"How good is the Lord! Mercy, great mercy is mingled with the trial attendant on my removal. Words cannot express the tenderness I feel towards you and your dear family, and others left behind. But I dare not allow myself to look back. I trust I have been directed by the finger of Providence, and I feel encouraged to proceed."

On arriving at Auburn, he again writes:

"I cannot be thankful enough, that through the good hand of the Lord upon us, we have all reached the place of our destination in safety. I need not say, that every effort is making to render our condition as pleasant as the nature of the case will allow. \* \* The Seminary opens to-day. My inauguration is to take place next Wednesday. May the Lord enable me to meet the occasion with a becoming spirit."

On Wednesday, October 29th, 1823, just fifty-six years from the day of his birth, he was inaugurated Professor of Christian Theology. His address, delivered on the occasion, was characterized by clear and enlarged views of the importance of a well-trained ministry, and

furnished to a large audience pleasing promise of his usefulness in the responsible place to which he had been called.

In entering upon his duties, Dr. Richards aimed, first of all, to meet responsibilities connected with his own particular department; and, secondly, to labor for the general welfare of the Seminary. Accordingly, his studies were made subordinate mainly to the range of instruction which he was called to impart. He carefully availed himself of everything furnished by the press, which had a particular relation to his official work, or which promised to aid him in the discharge of its duties.

We have already intimated that, for two years previous to his coming, the Seminary had been struggling for life. Much had been done—nay, all that could have been expected. The Trustees had put forth vigorous efforts. The citizens of Auburn, especially those whose views led them to sympathize with the religious features of the Seminary, had liberally cherished its infancy. Yet what had been done seemed only to reveal how much needed to be accomplished. No permanent provision had been made to sustain professors, who had hitherto “borne the burden and heat of the day,” and whose unsettled livings required faith in God much like Elijah’s, when he received his food from the ravens. An edifice, containing a main building and two wings, had been erected; but no part, with the exception of one wing, was ready for the reception of students. The Institution was destitute of scholarships or charity foundations; it could scarcely welcome indigent young men to a shelter, much less to bread or raiment.

Such was the state of the Institution at the inauguration of Dr. Richards. Funds were to be raised to complete and furnish the Seminary edifice, to secure an adequate Library, to found Professorships, and to aid such young men as were destitute of means, and yet were

willing to spend and be spent in the office of the Gospel Ministry.

To this work the new Professor addressed his well-adapted energies. By correspondence, by personal visits, by his influence in conventions and ecclesiastical bodies, he most earnestly commended the Seminary to the attention, the prayers and the charities of the Christian public.

The following extract is a specimen of his epistolary efforts in behalf of indigent students, and was written, just after his inauguration, to his eldest daughter :

“Five of our young men are yet unprovided for, and though we have expected from various quarters, I am anxious for the result. I want you to state the fact to our pious and benevolent female friends in N——. Fifty dollars would be sufficient to pay the seminary bill of a single student for a year. It would be gratifying to me, and would confer a lasting obligation on the Institution, if a little exertion could be made among you for our relief at the present time. Who would not be willing, in a case so urgent and important, to throw in her mite, and thus bid God speed to a youth who is anxious and trembling lest he should be stopped in his course.”

In the course of a few weeks, he alludes to an answer to the foregoing appeal, under the name of “*The Newark foundation.*”

Early in February, he visited Albany and Troy, in behalf of the Institution. From the latter place he writes :

“I am trying to do something for the Seminary, and I find a little time is necessary to beat down prejudice, and get the current into the right channel. My subscription in Troy stands this morning at \$312. I hope to bring it up to four or five hundred.”

From Albany he also writes :

“I perceive already that I have many prejudices to combat, and the loving-money-principle, the greatest of all obstacles, to over-

come. Nothing but the strongest fortitude, supported by a few of the choicest friends, can avail me now. I believe that I am in a good cause, and that the Lord is on my side. \* \* \* The present efforts, I consider merely in the light of an entering wedge ; but the wedge I shall drive as long as I can perceive that it moves at all. \* \* \* Time alone, with good management, can induce the Albanians to turn their attention to Auburn."

He returned home, after an absence of about three weeks, having raised in money and subscriptions a little more than twelve hundred dollars, besides receiving a pledge that a society should be formed in each place for the support of indigent students in the Seminary.

In the following summer he visited Boston in behalf of the child of his adoption.

On the 3d of July, he writes to his daughter :

"I find nothing can be done here by being in a hurry. The Boston folks are full of notions, and both time and skill are requisite to get the thing by the right handle."

On the 9th, he writes to Mrs. Richards as follows :

"Yesterday was the first time I put my hook down, after spending two weeks in baiting and getting ready. Three pretty clever fellows were taken in the course of the day, with one hundred dollars a piece. \* \* \* I know your impatience. \* \* \* But I must do right, and not sacrifice the interests of the Institution to my personal feelings."

During the same visit, he made an appeal in New York City, in behalf of the Seminary. He was encouraged in this effort by a letter written by Dr. Spring, of the Brick Church, from Philadelphia, of which the following is an extract :

"It is a critical moment with your Seminary, and I trust that the good people of New York will feel that it *must be supported*. I hope your appeal will not be fruitless ; and if my sentiments can be of any avail, you will make just such use of them as you see fit."



The result of this "appeal" may be learned from the following extract of a letter from Dr. Richards, written a few months after.

"The news from New York, in regard to the Seminary, is quite cheering. The \$12,000 professorship is made up by seven men of the Brick Church, and the prospects for the Library are flattering. Let God have the glory."

In October, 1825, he visited Philadelphia as an agent for the Seminary. He writes:

"I have thought it probable that I should not receive enough to pay my expenses to and from the place. Last evening I was brought to feel perfectly willing to receive the crumbs that fall from my Master's table: and you may judge of my surprise, when the first two crumbs amounted to twelve hundred dollars. \* \* \* I suppose that my movements here will not be very grateful to some of my brethren, but *if my success shall prove considerable*, I shall not be greatly moved at the trouble which I occasion."

Again, four days after, he writes:

"My subscription stands here at eighteen hundred and ninety dollars. \* \* \* We have here a few tried friends, but the greater part neither know us, or care any more for us, than if we lived in *Kamschatka*. In time to come, however, some will doubtless remember us; and pains must be taken to circulate among the good people of this city a knowledge of our Institution."

The Board of Trustees speak of this visit to Philadelphia as follows:

"His particular object was the establishment of a fund for the Professorship of Biblical Criticism. During his journey, he procured for that fund, in cash, notes and subscriptions, about \$2,850, and the donation of two hundred and twenty-five acres of land, from which will probably be realized at least four hundred dollars.

Early in the following spring he visited Geneva, Canandaigua, Geneseo, and other towns in Western New

York, everywhere making a favorable impression in behalf of the young "school of the prophets," and urging its claims to the attention and charities of the churches.

In September, 1826, or during the vacation of the Seminary, he traveled east, associating his relaxation from the duties of a Professor with the labors of a Soliciting Agent. He first visited his former congregation in Newark, and, in connection with his friendly calls upon the people, presented the claims of the Seminary, signifying that donations in aid of that infant institution would be received as the most grateful tokens which the donors could render of esteem and love for their former pastor. These kind solicitations, during this visit, resulted in a subscription of nearly a thousand dollars. As he continued his journeyings, his ruling passion constantly betrayed itself, both on sea and land; and on the boat which carried him to New Haven, to attend the commencement of Yale College, he secured from one individual a pledge of five hundred dollars. In allusion to this individual he writes, "How kindly did the Lord bring him in my way, and how favorably did he dispose his heart!"

The foregoing notices are submitted to the reader, in connection, to serve not only as indications of the general care which Dr. Richards exercised over the Seminary, but also of his readiness to "endure hardness" and toil to give it character, and influence, and permanency. It may be observed that several journeyings of this kind were performed during a recess or vacation, and thus his days of rest were used in the prosecution of the most arduous labors; while some of them were performed in the depth of winter, or early in the spring, thus subjecting his health to serious exposure and detriment. Besides, an absence from the bosom of his family, at an age when "sweet home" seems indispensable to render

one's condition *tolerable*, is an item not to be overlooked in estimating the self-sacrificing character of these services.

The following extract from a letter written to Mrs. Richards, during the absence last noticed, will show both the self-denial and the object of this kind of labor:

"I know your privations occasioned by my absence; but, believe it, they are not greater on your part than on mine. The longer I live, the more your society and home are *necessary* to my happiness. \* \* \* It is nothing but a sense of duty that can keep me away from home. But the Seminary must live and prosper, or neither you nor I can be happy. Yet there is a higher motive to direct us—the cause of truth and righteousness in the earth. The Auburn institution is destined, I trust, to be an efficient school of the prophets. It will live and be blessed, I have no doubt, generations after we are dead; and still its future usefulness may be closely connected with the *momentum* which is given to it in its infancy."

The years 1826, '27 were fraught with trials to the church in which Dr. Richards, both from his experience and position, would be expected strongly to sympathize. They were years of much religious excitement. This excitement had an intimate connection with the labors of Rev. Charles G. Finney as principal, and with the labors of subordinates, both ministers and laymen. The subordinates, in many things, were more extravagant than the principal; and their numbers were considerable throughout Central and Western New York. It was thought by many that some of the measures which were adopted by these evangelists, though they "zealously affected" men, did not affect them "well." Anxious seats were extensively used; females, in many instances, were encouraged to speak and pray in promiscuous assemblies; individuals were often prayed for in the churches, either by name, or in some other way by which they were made known to the congregation.



The *preaching*, also, as a means of excitement, was strikingly conformed to other measures which were used. The truth, though in many instances preached with fidelity, nevertheless was presented with a severity of tone and manner which strongly excited the passions of the hearers, and thus prevented its access to the conscience and the heart. And the praying, in many instances, was scarcely less severe than the preaching. Some, indeed, seemed to regard its efficacy as depending much upon the strong and denunciatory language and epithets under which sinners were commended to the mercy of God.

This feature in prayer was particularly developed when men high in official station were made the subjects of its supplications. The reason for this which seemed to obtain was, that the position of such men gave them an influence which, if they did not approve the measures, and encourage them, would prove specially disastrous, and contribute to shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. Thus, when pastors of churches, presidents of colleges and professors in theological seminaries were reluctant to go with the current, they were subject, in some instances, to abusive and slanderous epithets in the form of prayer. They were presented before the throne of mercy as "dead," as "unconverted," as "opposers of revivals of religion," as "keeping sinners out of heaven," and "encouraging them in their way to perdition." The venerable President of Hamilton College is said to have been prayed for as an "*old gray-headed sinner, leading souls down to hell*;" and the writer distinctly recollects a prayer-meeting within sight of that college, in which the plea was urged with great fervor, that God *would raze the walls of its buildings*, if necessary to bring the President and some of his associates to give countenance to the existing state of things!

The coming of Mr. Finney to Auburn, as an evange-

list, subjected Dr. Richards to the same treatment which men of similar views had received in other places. He and some of his associates in the Faculty of the Seminary were not prepared to regard the "new measures" as constituting the "more excellent way" in promoting the work of God. His cautious feet, therefore, avoided the way which his judgment could not approve. Such a position, taken by a prominent professor in a Theological Seminary, excited considerable attention, and exposed him to the animadversion of those who approved of the existing state of things. He was regarded as standing in the way of the work of the Lord. He was subjected to much unkind remark, and his position is said to have been especially recognized in prayer, in some of the pulpits within sight of the Seminary. It was deemed a strange thing that the Professor would not "break down" in such circumstances, and unite his energies and influence with those of the young evangelist. But Dr. Richards was not a man to "break down," or even *bend*, in violation of his own moral sense, and in utter disregard of the solemn and abundant teachings of his own experience. He was not a stranger in Jerusalem, and therefore ignorant of the history of things which had there occurred. The extravagances of Davenport and his coadjutors had taken place but a quarter of a century before his birth, and he had learned them from the lips of his parents. At the time of his own conversion, the church had not recovered from their disastrous influence, and his own spiritual infancy had been subjected to severe trials from the very prejudice against religion which these excesses had created. His own experience also, as a pastor, was abundant, for he had served the church thirty years in this relation. The fields of his labors had enjoyed "refreshings from the presence of the Lord," and he had learned that discrimination, tenderness and meekness, as well as boldness and zeal, were indispensable in such seasons.

He was therefore jealous of the existing movements. While he did not doubt that some good would be done, he deprecated the evils which his knowledge led him to anticipate. He trembled lest, while some should be converted, others, whose souls were of equal value, would become disgusted, and be driven to "a returnless distance" from the Gospel. He anticipated, also, that these things would engender strife in the church, rather than contribute to the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"—nay, that, on the whole, more would be lost to religion and to Zion than would be gained. He was *constrained*, therefore, as an honest man, to abstain from these measures. And the position *seemed*, in the circumstances, as hazardous as it was independent. The Seminary was in its infancy, and not prepared for the shock of revolution, and yet here was an honest difference of views in the house of its friends, on important matters and in scenes of great interest and excitement. The congregation in which Mr. Finney was preaching had nobly contributed to give birth to the Seminary, and to cherish its infancy. The pastor of the congregation was "one of the prime and most efficient agents in measures which had led to its establishment," had served several years as one of its professors, and had just resigned his professorship and retired with the blessing of the Institution upon his head. Also the students of the Seminary, to a considerable extent—young men of the first promise as to talents and piety—were led to wonder that their venerated Professor should not yield to the voice of his friends, and to, what seemed to them, the voice of duty. Rarely is one's position more trying than was that of Dr. Richards at this time. Had he yielded, he could certainly have urged very plausible, and what, to some minds, would have been regarded as the most satisfactory and important reasons, for so doing. He could have urged the *wishes* of his friends, who loved

Christ and his cause—the danger of *seeming* to oppose the work of God—the importance of union of action between himself and many who endeavored, at least, to *bear with* objectionable measures, in the hope that much good would be done. Nay, he could have said that he had acted advisedly, and under the influence of conviction expressed by his friends—that his influence, if given to the work, would strongly operate as a check upon any excesses which might exist.

But Dr. Richards was immovable. He could not yield contrary to his convictions of duty. And it is believed, that when the excitement had subsided, the honor awarded to his firmness and judgment was equal to the reproach to which he had been subjected. Many, it is believed, who then honestly differed from him, have since been ready to bless him for Zion's sake, for the position which he maintained. The Christian community, also, reposed in him augmented confidence from that day, and the impression extensively obtained, that he who could preside so safely over a Theological Seminary “in the palmy days of Evangelism,” might be safely trusted, under God, in any emergency which such an institution might be called to experience.

The labors of Dr. Richards as a soliciting agent, though already continued much longer than he had intended, were not entirely laid aside. During the recess of the Seminary, in January, 1827, he visited Rochester, and received several hundred dollars, in aid chiefly of the contingent fund of the Institution. Subsequent to this date, however, he went abroad in person much less than formerly, though his appeals to the benevolent, by letter, continued to the close of his life.

In the winter of 1827–28 his health seriously declined. His disease was a species of jaundice, which interrupted his labors as a professor, and, at times, compelled him wholly to suspend them. The writer, then

a member of the Institution, is able to testify that the suspension, however, was much less than the case seemed to demand. Often did he meet this venerable teacher in the lecture-room, when the retirement of his chamber and his bed seemed more fitting the state of his health. Of this illness, he writes to his eldest daughter in the spring of 1828, as follows :

"I have suffered more this winter from indisposition, than from any former one since I have resided in Auburn. \* \* \* Life's brief journey, with all its changes, its joys and its sorrows, will soon close. Too apt are we to forget how rapidly time hastens, and what amazing interests hang on it."

About two months after he writes again :

"What the Lord intends to do with me he wisely and kindly conceals in his own bosom. Perhaps he intends the restoration of my health and usefulness—perhaps he is about to bring all my earthly concerns to a close. I desire to leave the whole matter with him, and to rest contented with his sovereign will."

But while he thus submitted his case to the "sovereign will of God," he did not omit the use of such means as promised to restore his health. He remitted his ordinary studies—journeyed as he was able—purchased a horse and carriage as a means of frequent exercise in riding—visited mineral springs—and even read books to learn both the nature of his disease and its appropriate remedies. The following letter to his daughter may here find an appropriate place :

"I have lately been attending to chemistry myself, that I might form something of a judgment as to the nature of various chemical preparations which my physicians have prescribed. I perceive that in some cases they have been manifestly counterworking themselves. I have read some of the most celebrated medical works on the nature and treatment of the *jaundice*, and other biliary affections—a poor business, the doctors will say, for a sick man—and I do not think it time misspent. Somebody must decide when the



doctors disagree. I greatly respect the profession, and I do not mean to assume to myself any claim to judge for other people, nor even in my own case without the aid of professional advisers. But I do not intend to descend into the ditch blindfold, and without the least inquiry ; but among all the guessing and conjecturing, *guess a little myself*. One of my conjectures is, that I have taken too much medicine by half, and sometimes that which is injurious."

In the Spring of 1829 he received a severe injury from his horse, which at first seemed to threaten a fatal termination. He was assisting his servant in harnessing the animal, when it suddenly started, and throwing him down, planted both hind feet upon his chest, in the region of the stomach. In allusion to this event he writes as follows :

"I was enabled to rise and walk, but with such fainting and trembling as I apprehended would be attended with immediate dissolution. \* \* How true it is, that in the midst of life we are in death ; and that when our hopes are most buoyant with respect to our usefulness and comfort, we may be on the eve of closing our pilgrimage altogether."

In connection with his other infirmities, he was visited about this time with a cancerous affection in his nose, whose removal somewhat disfigured his noble and manly countenance. He speaks of it as follows :

"The cancerous disorder in my nose is entirely healed, but will leave, I think, a depression which, if I might have had my choice, I would have avoided. But this is a small matter, when weighed against many other evils, to which both body and soul stand exposed. \* \* It is good to have the sentence of death in ourselves. \* \* It weans us from the world ; it carries our thoughts to another and better state of being."

The illness of Dr. Richards, extending over a space of nearly two years, proved a serious embarrassment to the Seminary. When it commenced there were 76 students—the largest number furnished to the Institution at one

time since its commencement. But from this year a decline began. Some, who were on the ground, left for other Seminaries; and others, who had intended to pursue their theological course at Auburn, were prevented. The knowledge of Dr. Richards's illness was propagated, not only through his own State, but through New England—furnishing an argument to those who desired to turn the attention of young men to other institutions. To the decline thus begun, several other adverse influences essentially contributed. One was the decline of Hamilton College, which had been a liberal feeder to the Seminary, but which, just at this time, was sending from its walls few, if any, candidates for the Gospel ministry. Another, perhaps, was the establishment of a Theological Seminary in New Haven, Ct., to which many young men were attracted, both by the high literary character of the place, and also by the announcement that "some important discoveries in theology had there been made."

About the beginning of 1830, Dr. Richards' health had become essentially improved, and he applied himself to his duties with renewed courage and energy. He writes at this time :

"It is difficult for you, or any one not acquainted with the internal concerns of such an institution, readily to perceive the amount of labor demanded of an instructor. The mere correspondence connected with the institution, the chief of which falls on my shoulders, is not a trifling operation. But, thanks to a gracious Providence, my health has been wonderfully preserved, and still continues to improve."

Dr. Richards was ever ready to shoulder responsibility, in an emergency. This feature of his character made him a most efficient helper of those who had the oversight of the finances of the Institution, and greatly encouraged them in their efforts, especially in seasons of embarrassment and trial. An instance occurred like

this. The heart of one of the Trustees, at a certain time, fainted within him, in view of the difficulties which beset the Seminary. He was freely indulging in his gloomy forebodings, when it was announced that, in view of the state of things, Dr. Richards would leave home the next morning, with the design of seeking aid for the Institution. His desponding spirit was immediately relieved, and he exclaimed, **THEN THE SEMINARY WILL GO!— THEN IT WILL GO!**

In the year 1830, the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees reported that the Seminary was in debt ten thousand dollars, and that this debt was increasing from six to eight hundred dollars annually. In this state of things, the Professors agreed to throw off two hundred dollars each from their salaries, annually, until such time as the Trustees should be able to pay the stipulated sums, provided that the Boards of Trustees and Commissioners should, within one year, raise the sum of twelve thousand dollars, to be employed for the use of the Seminary, and to meet its existing engagements.

The year closed, and but seven thousand dollars had been secured. The Professors generously extended the probation from August to January. In the mean time, Dr. Richards took his pen. He prepared a brief narrative of the rise and progress of the Institution, setting forth its embarrassments and successes, its prospects and claims, connected with an offer of a liberal personal contribution, and a pungent appeal to all whom it might concern.

On the 30th of January 1832, he alludes to the effort of the Trustees, in a letter as follows :

*“ Our enterprise of raising \$12,000 for the Seminary before the 18th of this month has succeeded ; at which, you may well believe, I rejoice. It has thrown from me a heavy load of care and responsibility.”*

The anxieties and labors of Dr. Richards, which had looked to the *general* welfare of the Seminary, and which, for the space of twelve years, had been exceedingly burdensome, were somewhat relieved in 1835, by the accession of Rev. S. H. Cox, D.D., to the Professorship of Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Theology. He entered upon his duties in the fullness of his strength. Besides performing the appropriate services of his own department, he instructed, for a time, in Ecclesiastical Literature, and performed much labor for the Seminary in the form of raising funds. His coming was opportune, both on account of the "often infirmities" of Dr. Richards, and the decease of Dr. Perrine, which occurred during the following winter. He "who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," being about to remove one public servant to his final rest, graciously introduced another, whose versatility of talent and form of services, seemed particularly adapted to the emergency.

The compiler may here introduce an extract from a minute passed by the Board of Commissioners, on the decease of Dr. Perrine :

"But while we mourn our loss, in that he has been called to his reward, we would render unfeigned thanks that he was permitted so long and so ably to employ the powers of his discriminating mind, and the sympathies of his warm heart, in the service of this beloved institution."

The years of 1837 and '38 are never to be forgotten in the Presbyterian Church. The act of the General Assembly, in its summary excision of four Synods, was matter of extreme pain and mortification to thousands of the best men in the church, and to none more than to Dr. Richards. He lived in the heart of one, and in the immediate neighborhood of two more, of the Synods thus cut off. His position furnished him means of knowing their character both as to doctrine and practice. He

was engaged in teaching Theology, in a Seminary specially fostered by these Synods; and if views of doctrine and church order had prevailed upon this field, essentially different from those taught in its own Seminary, he must have known it. Yet he was able to see no adequate cause for the amputation which took place. Though he had taken occasion to resist some "new measures," which at different times, and in different places had received some favor; and also some innovations in doctrine, which, originating in other fields, had been brought into Western New York; yet he firmly believed that the church and ministry connected with these Synods, as a whole, deserved a place among the first in the order and faith of the Presbyterian name. And though he regretted to be separated from the ecclesiastical recognition of brethren, to whom his soul had been knit through all his Christian and ministerial history, yet (to use the language of Dr. Cox, one of his colleagues) *he preferred to be of the EXSCINDED rather than of the EXSCINDING.*

The proceedings of the General Assembly in this matter turned all eyes to Dr. Richards. Some who had used the ecclesiastical knife, and even numbered him among their victims, seemed to expect that he would approve their views and proceedings. On the other hand, the severed and bleeding Synods relied with the confidence of children upon his sympathy and counsel in the day of trouble. His brethren at the East who regretted the excising act, and deprecated a schism in the Presbyterian Church, wrote to him as to a father, asking his counsel and bespeaking his attendance at Philadelphia in the spring of 1838, that the Assembly might have the benefit of his counsels. Others wrote to him, anxiously inquiring after the real character of the excised Synods for Christian faith and practice. The following letter, written to his daughter, who had

expressed some anxiety in regard to his appointment as a commissioner for the spring of 1838, reveals the *spirit* by which his conduct was regulated in this day of rebuke, and his confidence in those whom he was appointed to represent :

“ You express some anxiety about my being appointed a delegate to the next General Assembly. If life and health are spared, I expect to fulfill that appointment ; but I do not feel myself pledged to any course of violence. \* \* \* The brethren in this region feel quite calm on the subject—disposed, however, to do that which, after prayer, much counsel and reflection, shall seem meet to be done. The condition of things in the Church, as well as in the State, it must be confessed, is quite ominous at present ; but we pray and look for a brighter day. I know of nothing better for us as individuals than to put everything over into the hands of infinite wisdom and goodness, and cheerfully leave the issue with Him who governs all.”

In allusion to the Convention at Auburn, which was held in August following the spring of 1837, and composed of representatives of the excinded Synods, and others sympathizing with them, he says :

“ Much do I regret that there was any occasion for such a measure ; but I hope the Lord will overrule it for good. Great harmony of sentiment and feeling prevailed among the members of the Convention, and a good spirit, I trust, towards our brethren of the Old School. They have acted, we think, under great misapprehension of the facts in the case.”

In November, 1838, he addressed the following to Rev. Joseph C. Stiles, of Kentucky, in answer to inquiries proposed concerning the religious doctrines and order of the “ excinded ” in Central and Western New York :

NOVEMBER 13, 1838.

*To the Rev. J. C. Stiles :*

MY DEAR SIR—I regret that my engagements will not allow me to give you a full and detailed account of the ecclesiastical affairs of Western New York. All I can do is briefly to reply to your several queries. You ask, first, What is the degree of corruption in doctrine and order around me, in my judgment.

I belong to the Synod of Geneva, which embraces two hundred and one churches—one hundred and forty organized with a session on strictly Presbyterian principles, and sixty-one which have no session, but which make use of our Book of Discipline in their church courts, and submit their acts and doings to the supervision of Presbytery as much as if they had a session. They are, in fact, Presbyterian churches with a defective organization. Instead of doing their business by means of a bench of Elders, they do it by assembling the male communicants, after the Congregational method. One of our Presbyteries, which has under its care thirty-nine churches, has but two which are not strictly Presbyterian. Another, embracing twenty-five churches, has not a single church without a regular session.

Presbyterianism is popular in this part of the country, and with a little kind and prudent management, it might become universal. Nothing but the untimely fears and mistaken policy of some of the good brethren in other parts of the church, has prevented it from becoming far more prevalent than it really is.

“As to corruption in doctrine, I know of none which is deep and fundamental among the ministers and churches which stand connected with our Synod. The ministers have all solemnly professed to receive the Confession of Faith, and the Catechism of our church, as containing that system of doctrine which is taught in the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, I do not suppose that they consider this as amounting to a declaration that they receive every proposition included in this extended confession, but such things only as are vital to the system, and which distinguish it from Arminianism, Pelagianism and Semipelagianism. They believe in the doctrine of *total depravity* by nature—*Regeneration* by the Sovereign and efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit—*Justification* by the righteousness of Christ, as the only true and meritorious cause—the *perseverance* of the saints, and the *interminable punishment* of the wicked. They have no scruple about the doctrine of particular and personal election, but maintain it firmly as

a doctrine of the Bible which ought to have a place in the instructions of the pulpit.

“As to our churches, their opinions may be learned from the brief confessions they use in admitting members to full communion. It is the custom in this part of the country, when a person is admitted to the fellowship of the church upon his own confession, to require a public assent to a creed embracing all the great leading doctrines of the Gospel, as well as his solemn and explicit engagement to lead a life of devoted piety. It is common for each Presbytery to supervise the creeds made use of by the churches under its care. Knowing this to be the fact, I addressed a letter to each of the Presbyteries in the bounds of the four excised Synods, requesting them to state whether these confessions, employed at the admission of members to their communion, were conformable in their tenor and spirit to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of our church, desiring them at the same time to send me a sample of them. The answer I received was, that these brief formulas fully accorded with the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church. I have now before me twenty-six of these confessions from as many Presbyteries; and if I have any judgment as to what belongs to orthodoxy, they are sound as a roach, with the exception of the article on Atonement. They favor the idea of general atonement, as John Calvin and the early Reformers did. Some, I suppose, would regard this as deviating from our standards; but, aside from this, I do not believe that Dr. Green himself would find any fault with these confessions. I say this confidently with respect to them all, *one alone* excepted. In one of these confessions there was not so full a recognition of the Divine decree extending to all events absolutely as I could desire, and yet the language of Scripture was employed, which asserts that God governs or works all things after the counsel of his own will.\* Is it to be supposed that ministers would *demand*, or the people from time to time would *give their public and solemn assent* to these confessions, if they were very far gone in heretical opinions? Can you get people in our Methodist Churches to subscribe to strong and

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\* Some half a dozen lines are here omitted, on account of an injury done to the paper, by which some words are lost. The idea, however, is this: “These confessions, instead of being got up by these Presbyteries to defend their orthodoxy, have been adopted to govern the faith of the churches under their care, and to serve as bonds of Christian fellowship.”



pointed Calvinistic formulas, supposing that their ministers were willing and desirous that they should?

“But if this be a true state of the case, whence the alarm which has pervaded every part of the Presbyterian Church, with respect to our Arminianism, Pelagianism, Perfectionism, and I know not what. Has there been no ground for the fears and suspicions which have been entertained? I cannot conscientiously say that I think there has been none. A state of things has existed which excited apprehensions that some were departing from the faith once delivered to the saints.

“During the excitements which prevailed under the labors of Messrs. Burchard and Finney, and their associates, things were said and done which had better have been avoided. A new style of preaching was introduced, new measures adopted and advocated, and, occasionally, new opinions advanced touching the prayer of faith, the method of the Spirit’s influence in conversion, and the best method of securing that influence and promoting the conversion of sinners. No direct encroachment, however, was made upon any of the great doctrines of the Gospel. These were cheerfully admitted, and some of them distinctly and powerfully inculcated. But a notion was imbibed that the doctrine of election, and of the sinner’s dependence on Divine influence, and some other doctrines of the Calvinistic system had heretofore been urged out of due proportion, and that more ought to be said of the sinner’s immediate obligation to repent and believe. In pressing this obligation, they urged the sinner’s entire ability to comply with the terms of the Gospel. In a word, they taught that sinners *could*, but *would not*, repent without special Divine influence. Many believed then, and do still believe, that their language on this subject was unguarded, and likely to produce an Arminian impression on the hearer. That such was the fact in numerous instances, there is no reason to question. Some of Mr. Finney’s converts doubted whether he believed in the doctrine of election, and wrote to him, while he was in Boston, to know if he did. He answered that he did believe the doctrine, and that they ought to believe it.

“From the manner, however, in which some of our preachers at that time presented the truths of the Gospel, and especially from the fact that they did not very prominently present some of them at all, there was danger that an Arminian leaven would creep in, and corrupt the faith of the churches. This danger was not

lessened by the speculations of the New Haven divines, and by some other dubious writings from New England.

"After all, through the good hand of God upon us, I do not believe that any radical error has taken root among us, and is likely to prevail. I speak of the churches in our own connection. There is scattered through our bounds a set of Christians called Unionists, who hold the doctrine of sinless perfection, and other absurd notions. But they are not of us, and receive no countenance from any of our judicatories. Were you to ask me to name the minister or the church in our Synod who did not fully and unqualifiedly believe in the doctrine of the *total depravity of human nature*, in *regeneration by the influence of the Holy Spirit*, in *personal election and justification by faith* through the righteousness of Christ only, I could not do it. I have much the same impressions, with respect to the Synods of Utica and Genesee, and the Synod of the Western Reserve; but I am not as well acquainted with the members of these Synods. Still, it is true we do not all see eye to eye. There are shades of difference in some less important matters. What these are, I have neither time nor room to state to you. But allow me, in conclusion, to say, that in my judgment, there never was a greater mistake, than that under which our Old School brethren are laboring.

"1st. As to the prevalence of error in the excinded Synods.

"2d. As to its cause. The state of belief is not as they suppose it. Nor do the errors which have been supposed to exist owe their origin to any such cause as they ascribe them to. They seem to think that Congregationalism has done all the mischief. It has had no more influence in the case than the moons of Jupiter. Our Congregational Churches, as a general fact, are the most stable and thorough orthodox churches we have. But my sheet is full, and I have only room to say, that I left the Constitutional Assembly last Spring, from ill health alone.

"With much affection, I am truly yours,

"JAMES RICHARDS."

It may be proper to add, that the schism in his beloved church never seemed to diminish his love for either of its parts, though it threw his sympathies on the side of the excinded. In relation to this whole matter, he entertained the most kind and conciliatory spirit. He loved those who had cut him off from their body as though

he were an unworthy and gangrened limb. He studiously avoided everything that looked like impatience, in word and deed. Nor did he feel any pride in the appellation by which he and his excised brethren were distinguished from others from whom they were separated. His temper of mind, at this point, is happily illustrated by the following incident :

An aged woman, who had enjoyed his early ministry, was permitted to hear him preach subsequent to the excising acts. As she was walking from the church, in conversation with Mrs. Richards, she inquired, Is Dr. Richards an Old School man or a New School man ? Mrs. R., not disposed to answer the question, referred it to her husband—when he replied, “ *My dear, I hope that I belong to the SCHOOL OF CHRIST.*”

As the infirmities of age increased, Dr. Richards received great pleasure, in view of the brightening prospects, and increasing influence and usefulness of the Seminary. He welcomed, most cordially, his brethren who, from time to time, were added to its Board of Instruction ; and received, with the sympathy and affection of a father, the young men who came to enjoy the privileges which it furnished.

In October, 1839, he thus writes :

“ Dr. Dickinson and Dr. Halsey are both on the ground. The Seminary seems to be looking up, so far as officers and students are concerned. The professorships are all filled with their appropriate incumbents, and a large class of new students have entered.”

It is proper to add, that he lived to see the Institution recovered from its decline in the number of its pupils, and enjoying a state of prosperity, embarrassed only by want of adequate funds.

It will be observed that the compiler has dwelt much upon the care and labor of Dr. Richards in behalf of the general and financial interests of the Seminary. The

reasons for this are the following : 1. The means in the hands of the compiler, from which any connected history of his residence at Auburn can be formed, are chiefly letters written by himself to the members of his own family, and in these letters he refers mainly to the general interests of the Seminary, and his labors to promote them. 2. The character of Dr. Richards, simply as a professor or teacher in the Seminary, will be given in another place ; and 3. His character and influence in all his relations to the Institution could not be made known to the public, only by a course similar to the one we have pursued.

Nominally, Dr. Richards held no pre-eminence in the Faculty of the Seminary, yet, virtually, he was the presiding officer. Nor was this all. While his health permitted he was more abundant in his labors as a traveling soliciting agent, than his brethren. He was also, to all intents, both the Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer of the Board of Instruction until the day of his death. This responsibility was not assumed or coveted, but it was referred to him by his associates, not only because their own tastes and habits inclined them to other forms of service, but as the result of their conviction, that his great influence abroad, his power of appeal, his accurate knowledge of the history and wants of the institution, his careful business habits and most rigid punctuality, peculiarly fitted him for these various duties.



## CHAPTER V.

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### LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.

FOR several months previous to his decease, the health of Dr. Richards declined gradually, though there were intervals when it seemed to improve. He had long entertained the belief that he was laboring under a disease of the *heart*, and the remedies to which he resorted were chosen with reference to such a belief. But a post-mortem examination showed that his disease had affected mainly the stomach, having materially diminished the natural dimensions of that important organ. Perhaps this may account for a gradual loss of flesh to which he was subject, and to which he often alluded in his correspondence, even during those intervals when his health appeared in some respects to be improving. He was subject, at times, to a determination of blood to the head, and of "subsequent suspension of arterial action." In the autumn of 1842, while walking in the village of Auburn, he was suddenly seized, and fell upon the pavement, and was taken up in a state of almost entire insensibility. From this shock he never entirely recovered, and he regarded it as a new "sentence of death" passed upon him by the voice of Providence. It became the occasion of manifest sanctification, and there is reason to believe that it contributed essentially to his diligence in setting his house in order, and becoming "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." In a letter written at this time he says:

"My chief concern is, to have my house in order in relation to

both worlds. Never did the Bible appear so precious to me as during this sickness. O that I had studied its precious pages more!"

While thus afflicted with bodily infirmities he became the subject of a most painful bereavement in the death of his eldest child, Mrs. Beach, which occurred at Newark, New Jersey, on the 13th of December. He loved this daughter, not only as his first-born, but for the great excellence of her character. When the tidings of her death reached him he rose instantly from his seat, and with burdened heart and moistened eye, and hand raised toward heaven, exclaimed, "*My daughter! my first-born, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power! THOU ART GONE TO HEAVEN AND I SHALL MEET THEE THERE.*"

This affliction, so heavy, so sudden, and coming at a time when his health was feeble, the bereaved father at first seemed hardly able to bear. He entertained apprehensions that his frame would sink under it. He therefore requested that his family would forbear all expressions of grief in his presence, that he might avoid the accumulation of sorrow which the power of sympathy might occasion. After the lapse of a few days, in a letter to his eldest son, he notices the death of this daughter as follows:

"I need not say, that in the death of your dear sister we feel ourselves sorely bereaved. It is an exceedingly dark and trying dispensation of Divine Providence, and is well calculated to teach us what an empty and uncertain portion the world is. \* \* \* Our dear A—— has been torn from us and her beloved family, suddenly and unexpectedly—but not, I trust, without being essentially prepared. She has for thirty years given the most abundant proof that her piety was sincere. Very few were so conscientious, so consistent and uniform, as she. Her meekness and gentleness, her humility and self-denial, told us of whose spirit she had drunk, and in whose steps she was treading. I

have not a particle of doubt that she has gone to be with Christ, which is far better. This greatly consoles us ; but the event has fallen out under God's government, which is still a higher and stronger reason for our submission. May it please the Lord to sanctify this visitation to us all."

During the winter and spring his health, though precarious, was somewhat improved, and he was able to give considerable attention to his duties as a professor. He did not, however, intermit that direct preparation for the close of his earthly cares, to which his mind had for several months been particularly directed. In April, when his youngest son was paying him a visit, he ordered his horse and carriage, and invited him to ride with him. The object, as the event proved, was to secure an opportunity for a free and full communication of his views and feelings, and for imparting to his son the counsels of a father's heart. He remarked, on this occasion, that he had survived nearly all who commenced life with him, and that, in all probability, he was near his journey's end. He spoke with much emotion of God's dealings with him—of the way in which he had been led—and of the "mercy and truth" which God had shown him in the various and responsible relations which he had been called to sustain. He referred, with peculiar feeling, to the infirmities and sins which had attached themselves even to his ministry; and said that, after all he had tried to do for God and his kingdom, his hope of acceptance was founded solely on the "*boundless riches*" of Divine mercy in the Gospel. "Before the interview closed he turned to me," says his son, "and fixing his eye intently on me, said, *I want you, my son, to be a holier man and a more useful man, than I have ever been.*"

On the 27th of this month he addressed a letter to his eldest son at Poughkeepsie, who had just lost a beloved child—a lad of thirteen years—by drowning. The loss

of this son, and the circumstances of his death, had deeply agonized the heart of the father, and spread gloom over the family. The boat, containing the child and his elder brother, had upset in the father's presence; and as he stood upon the shore, his two sons were struggling in the water and cleaving to the boat for life. Unable to give personal aid, he ran and cried for the help of others, but when he returned the youngest boy had sunk to rise no more. The body remained in the river for several days. The following is the substance of the letter written by Dr. Richards to his afflicted son on this occasion :

“ A letter from your brother Edward informs us that the body of dear little Henry had not then been found—a circumstance which naturally augments your trial, and prolongs its anguish. But this, too, is a part of God's wise design—a thing determined from eternity, and without which his scheme of government would be less perfect. How gladly would I be with you, in this hour of darkness and sorrow, but the state of my health forbids. \* \* My prayer to God is, that he will be with and sustain you. It is infinitely easy for him to pour such a flood of light and peace into your mind, as not only to soften the anguish of your spirit, and enable you to bear without a murmur what he is pleased to lay upon you, but even to rejoice that he reigns and does all his pleasure, through all places of his dominion, leaving no one circumstance uncontrolled and undirected by him. Try, my dear son, to come near to him, and pour your sorrows into his bosom. He has a father's heart infinitely more tender than that of any earthly parent. He never mistakes either the means of our correction, the time, or the measure. You may, with great confidence, cast all your care upon him, and roll your burdens on his arm. \* \*. O that these repeated strokes of affliction might have their proper effect, by working in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory !”

During the same month he addressed the following letter to his brother Abraham Richards, of the city of New York, who had just been bereaved of his wife:



• • “We have heard of your great affliction, in the death of our dear sister, highly esteemed and beloved by us all. More you could not lose in any earthly friend. She was all, to you and her dear family, that could be expected or desired. There are few such wives and mothers in our imperfect world, with a heart so tender, and a discretion so sound. She was, indeed, everybody’s friend, and has left behind her an imperishable memorial of her universal and disinterested benevolence. • • It is past all doubt, that she has gone to be with her Saviour—and them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. You will naturally feel that you needed her to accompany you in the few remaining steps of life’s journey; but God knows what is best for us and those we love. Submission to his will is equally our interest and our duty. You and I must both feel that the morning cloud has veered far to the west, and will soon disappear. It is high time for us to think much and well upon the hour which will separate us from this world, and fix our destiny for an unceasing hereafter.” • • •

In the month of July, and about two weeks before his death, he held another conversation with his youngest son, who was again providentially at home, and who describes the interview as follows:—“It was short and uninterrupted; but the few broken intervals then enjoyed he embraced to impart his paternal counsel, as if conscious that his end was near. Unusual solemnity and fervor characterized his words of benediction, as they fell from his quivering lips on my taking leave of him.”

It was a custom with him and his colleagues to pass the Sabbath evening together in the exercises of religious devotion. On the Sabbath evening previous to the last which he spent on earth, he and one of his associates in the faculty, had been engaged in an animated interchange of views and feelings with regard to the privileges and hopes of believers both living and dying, when it was proposed to close the interview with prayer. In this exercise, Dr. Richards enjoyed unwonted freedom and enlargement. The windows of heaven were opened, and the tongue of the suppliant was loosed. He seemed

to recall everything which ought to be remembered in supplication with the greatest facility, and he poured out his soul before God like water. The Seminary—the Church of Christ—the salvation of souls—his own family, including a son absent on the ocean—the conversion of the world—were all remembered in the comprehensiveness and the fervency of his supplication. “It *seemed*,” said his colleague, “that it was the last prayer I should hear him utter:” and so it proved. Yet with all these indications of being “quite on the verge of heaven,” there is reason to suppose that he did not himself apprehend that his end was so near. Though on the eve of spreading his pinions to fly away and be at rest with God, he knew it not. His infirmities had brought him to the determination, however, to resign the chair of Christian Theology in the Seminary, at the anniversary which was to take place about the middle of the ensuing month. In pursuance of this design, he penned a letter to his youngest son, intimating that important business would come before the Board of Commissioners, at their approaching session, and bespeaking his attendance as a member of the Board. This letter, written but eight days before his death, contained no mention of unusual indisposition, but, on the contrary, expressions of gratitude that he had endured the warm season thus far so well, and had been able to discharge, with so much uniformity, his official duties. But God’s ways are not as man’s. His servant was to be released from his official duties, though not in the *manner* which he contemplated. He had always regarded it as desirable to die, as he was accustomed to say, “with his armor on, and at the head of his troops.” This honor God had determined to give him. From the date of his last letter to his son, to which allusion has been made, he complained more of debility. On Saturday he was attacked with a bowel complaint, which materially reduced his strength, and became an oc-

casion of anxiety to his family. But, though feeble, he did not think it needful to keep his room. On the afternoon of that day, at the instance of some of the young men in the Seminary, who proposed to furnish him a conveyance, he prepared himself to go out and meet the Hon. J. Q. Adams, who was to visit Auburn at that time. The effort to secure a conveyance having, however, failed, he quietly submitted to forego the pleasure of seeing Mr. Adams, remarking, at the same time, that he had "used more exertion to behold the face of that honest republican than he would have made to look upon the face of a king."

Near the close of the day, he visited a new dwelling which he had been erecting, and which had just been completed. He surveyed carefully every apartment from the garret to the cellar; and when about to retire, he planted his foot impressively upon the floor, and said to the builder: *This will do—this will do.* He had erected this edifice, in anticipation of retiring soon from his office as Professor; and as a home for his family when he should be "gathered to his fathers." And that this house should be completed just in time to secure his survey and approbation, as the last business transaction of his life, and should offer a new home to his family, just at the time when the close of his official relations deprived them of another, will be noticed by devout minds as an arrangement of a kind Providence, worthy of admiration. He had been requested to conduct the religious exercises of the chapel in the Seminary, on the next day (Sabbath) and retired early, with a view to acquire, by rest, sufficient strength for the anticipated labor; but when the Sabbath came, he was unable to leave his house. On the following morning, one of his classes came in a body to his house, with a view to recitation. He met them at the door and excused himself for the time, but intimated his hope that he should be

able to meet them on the morrow. But the venerable man had given his last lecture—had conducted his last recitation. As the day drew near to its close, and while he was engaged in conversation with one of his colleagues, he was seized suddenly with a severe chill, his strength failed, and even a change passed over his countenance, leaving an unwonted aspect, which continued to the last. From this time, his articulation became impaired, and he took little notice of what was passing around him. His reason, however, did not leave him. On Tuesday evening it was intimated to Mrs. Richards by her daughter, that she had better retire for a season, and obtain a little rest. The proposal attracted his notice, and as if sensible that the hour of his release was near, and the watchings of his family almost at an end, he said with an audible voice : *My dear, you must not leave me—you must not leave me.* He said no more. Such of his wants as friends could supply he continued to indicate by appropriate signs ; and when his friends could do no more, he signified that his remaining wants were abundantly supplied from the “river that proceedeth from the throne of God, and the Lamb.” He lingered until daybreak, when he ceased to breathe. Death was not only stingless, but it had no power to create a pang, or extort a groan. The soul left its tabernacle in a manner, as noiseless as the whisper which said, “Sister spirit, come away,” or the motion of the angel’s wing on which it was wafted to Heaven.

“How blest the righteous when they die,  
When holy souls retire to rest !  
How mildly beams the closing eye,  
How *gently* heaves the expiring breast.

“So fades a summer cloud away,  
So sinks the gale when storms are o’er,  
So gently shuts the eye of day,  
So dies a wave along the shore.”

In view of the mournful event which had deprived them of a much-loved teacher and friend, the students of the Seminary, at a public meeting held on the 4th of August, passed, among others, the following resolutions:

“Resolved, That while our grief at the death of our venerated Professor of Christian Theology is tempered by the recollection of his long and useful life, and the confident hope that he is present with Christ, we cannot but feel that, as members of this institution, we have suffered a loss of which it were useless to attempt an adequate expression. But we may be permitted, in common with all who knew him, to express our conviction that in his death the cause of sound Christian Theology has lost one of its ablest vindicators, and the practice of Christian virtue one of its brightest exemplars.

“Resolved, That to the afflicted family and near friends of the deceased we tender our heartfelt commiseration, with the assurance that our sorrow, though it cannot be as great as theirs, is not the grief of strangers, but *in kind* like their own; for we can truly say that he was a father to us all.

“Resolved, That we attend his funeral as mourners, and wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.”

On the same day his funeral was attended by a large concourse of citizens and friends, in the Second Presbyterian Church, where an appropriate sermon was delivered by Dr. Mills, the oldest surviving Professor in the Seminary, from Acts xiii. 36: “After he had served his own generation by the will of God, [he] fell on sleep.”

The intelligence of the death of Dr. Richards created a strong and painful sensation. The friends of the Seminary not only, but the Christian public, felt that a great man had fallen in Israel. Both at Morristown and Newark, where he had labored in the ministry, the pastors preached with reference to his death.

At a meeting of the Board of Commissioners, convened on the 16th of the same month, the following minute was adopted, and ordered to be published :

“Whereas, it hath pleased Almighty God, in his sovereign and holy providence, to remove by death the Rev. James Richards, D.D., Professor of Christian Theology in this institution—

“Resolved, That while in the removal, at this peculiar juncture, of so able, faithful and successful an instructor of the pupils of this Seminary in revealed truth, we feel and submit to the chastening hand of God, both upon ourselves and upon the institution, we do, at the same time, believe it to be our duty and privilege to remember with gratitude his great goodness in continuing the valuable services of the deceased for such a number of years, and to such an advanced period of life.

“Resolved, That this Board do hereby tender to the bereaved widow and family of the deceased our affectionate sympathy, while we confidently commend them to the care and keeping of that God who has revealed himself as the widow’s God and the father of the fatherless.”

On the same day the following, among other resolutions, were unanimously adopted, at a meeting of the Alumni of the Seminary :

“Resolved, That while we would not, if we could, call back our revered friend and instructor from his exalted and triumphant state, we nevertheless greatly mourn his loss, as one endeared to us by recollections of his kind and gentlemanly deportment towards us when his pupils, and the deep interest he ever manifested in our highest qualifications for the sacred office ; also by considerations of his high moral and intellectual worth, of his great ability and unwearied assiduity as a *teacher of theology*, and of the dignity, prudence and skill with which he presided over this institution, especially in seasons of adversity and trial.

“Resolved, That, as an expression of our deep respect for the venerated dead, we take immediate measures to erect a suitable monument to his memory.”

In pursuance of the last resolution, a beautiful monument was erected within the space of a few months, of the sarcophagus form, and containing the following inscription :

**I N M E M O R I**  
**OF**  
**THE REV. JAMES RICHARDS, D.D.**

BORN IN NEW CANAAN, CONN., OCT. 29TH, 1767.

ORDAINED AND INSTALLED PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH IN MORRISTOWN, N. J., 1794.

INSTALLED PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEW-  
ARK, N. J., 1809.

INAUGURATED PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN THE THEO-  
LOGICAL SEMINARY OF AUBURN, N. Y., 1823.

DIED AUGUST 2, 1843.

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**His Record is on High.**

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*The Alumni of the Seminary join with the Family of the  
Deceased in erecting this Monument to Departed Worth.*



## CHAPTER VI.

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### NOTICES OF HIS CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE IN VARIOUS RELATIONS.

**THE** person of Dr. Richards was well suited to introduce him to the respect of others. His frame was tall and commanding. The features and expression of his countenance constituted no uncertain index either of his strength of intellect or kindness of heart. Many have remarked, that "Dr. Richards was one of nature's noblemen." His manly form, his dignified movement, his intelligent and benignant countenance, and his gentle and affectionate address, could not fail to secure the admiration of those who are willing to "give honor to whom honor is due." "When he went out to the gate through the city, the young men hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up. \* \* \* When the ear heard him, then it blessed him, and when the eye saw him it gave witness to him."

The social character of Dr. Richards was marked by much simplicity, frankness, patience, kindness and integrity. He was a friend in whom "the heart doth safely trust;" a husband affectionate and devoted; a father that "provoked not his children to wrath, but brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In his business relations, he "owed no man anything;" in his relations to the State, he claimed his rights as a citizen, and led "a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;" as a pastor and teacher, he was "kind, and easy to be entreated."

The uprightness of Dr. Richards was well nigh proverbial. In matters of worldly business, he both avoided



and despised a mean and dishonest transaction. Next to vital godliness, did the exhibition of practical honesty give him pleasure. I may here relate an incident, in connection with his history, the remembrance of which he cherished with much interest, as a happy illustration of sterling integrity.

While at Newark, his brother, Silas Richards, then a successful merchant in Liverpool, England, proposed to furnish him a valuable accession to his library. To secure, however, a selection of books suited to the wants of a clergyman, he placed a sum of money at the disposal of his pastor, Dr. Raffles, a name which has been long and favorably known in this country, and desired him to procure the books. In compliance with the request, Dr. Raffles procured and forwarded a large number of choice literary, as well as standard theological works, of his own country. After the lapse of nearly a quarter of a century, he found, accidentally, that a small balance was still standing to the credit of his friend. He immediately put principal and interest together, and sent the value in books to Dr. Richards, thus accomplishing the liberal intention of the donor, and gratifying the object of the benefactions, both in their reception and in the beautiful exemplification of a rigid integrity on the part of his brother in the ministry. Upon a mind formed like that of the subject of this sketch, such incidents make impressions never to be forgotten. He lamented deeply the prevalence of principles in the commercial world, with which the honesty taught in the Bible has no sympathy; and no man could forfeit his confidence sooner, than by even a slight deviation from the path of practical uprightness.

While a lover and an exemplar of justice, he also loved and practiced the virtues of benignity and kindness. In nothing was this manifest, more than in those relations in which he was regarded as the superior. If

invested with the authority of the teacher, the dignity of his position became the occasion for condescension and kindness—never for coldness and reserve. He regarded a high position chiefly for the opportunities it furnished for doing good. Says a former pupil, "He was the humble, tender-hearted, sympathizing friend, rather than the cold, assured, self-sufficient professor."

Says another :

"There is one peculiarity in the character of Dr. Richards, which I think deserves special notice. I refer to his tender and affectionate sympathy for the young men placed under his instruction. In all his intercourse with them, whether in the lecture-room, or elsewhere, while he ever maintained the dignity becoming his station, he at the same time made them feel at ease, and allowed them that unembarrassed freedom of discussion and inquiry, which greatly tended to elicit and impress truth, remove ignorance and prejudice, and render his instructions at once acceptable and profitable.

"And when the poor and friendless student needed counsel, he found easy and welcome access to the heart of his beloved teacher ; and when any of his pupils were afflicted with spiritual trials, and troubled with doubts and solitudes, they had no difficulty in approaching Dr. Richards, and found him ever ready to sympathize with them, and prompt to minister such consolation and advice as the circumstances of the case seemed to require."

Dr. Richards also loved to bend himself to all the familiarities and charities of domestic life ; and while he maintained the dignity of the Christian, and the Christian Minister, yet no man found higher enjoyment in the appropriate and affectionate reciprocities of the family relations. He was the companion, as well as the husband and the father, in the domestic circle. For nearly half a century he and his wife traveled life's journey together, in obedience to the vows, and in the enjoyment of the rich and appropriate blessings, of the marriage covenant, as well as "heirs together of the grace of life."

But we shall take occasion to dwell particularly upon the character of Dr. Richards in the parental relation. The writer is led to this the more, from the peculiar admiration created in his own mind of this character, as developed in his written correspondence with his children.

It may be proper to furnish the reader with some extracts from a few of the many letters which Dr. Richards addressed to his children. It may also aid the reader if we announce the *subject* to which each extract particularly relates.

## TO HIS SECOND DAUGHTER.

*Theatre going.*—"You correctly judged that I should be pleased to learn that *one* visit to the theatre was sufficient to satisfy you, and *more* than to satisfy. Whatever may be said of that species of amusement, it is an undoubted truth, that it will always adapt itself to the *corruptions of mankind*, either more covertly or more openly, and ultimately tend to make a depraved world *more depraved*."

## TO HIS ELDEST SON.

*Entering College.*—"You have now left your father's house, perhaps never to return to it as a permanent residence. It is impossible for me to express the solicitude which I feel for your welfare. \* \* Having mingled but little with men, you are not yet aware of the force of corrupt example, nor into how many snares you may be led by the strength of your own passions, and by the enticements of those who are willing to see others as abandoned as themselves. With all the tenderness of parental affection, let me entreat you to have but few acquaintances; and let those few be *select*, such as you are assured will be of no disservice to you, either in the pursuit of your studies or in your moral deportment. Be attentive to the order and regulations of college. Never absent yourself from *recitations* or *prayers*. Much will depend upon your *beginning* well, and forming habits at the outset which will be creditable to you among the students, and secure the confidence of the Faculty. And having made a good beginning, *persevere*. Your collegiate course will be likely to stamp your character through life. \* \* I would earnestly recommend it to you to husband your time. \* \* As to your *moral* deportment, let it

be scrupulously correct, and framed upon the principles of the Gospel. \* \* Two things I most earnestly request—that you will never play at cards, nor other games of chance; they are a waste of time, and most mischievous and dangerous things, and of all recreations most unsuitable for a student—and, that you do not frequent any of the public-houses or places of refreshment. \* \* Above all things, my dear son, fear God. \* \* To his merciful care I commend you, and earnestly beseech him to keep you from all evil.”

## TO THE SAME.

*Choice of a Profession.*—“I have never expressed any direct wish to you on this subject, though I conceive it to be a point of very great moment, and one which requires solemn and mature reflection. Your present and eternal state may be very closely connected with your decision of it. If you had a renovated heart, and knew the grace of God in truth, nothing on earth could give me so much pleasure as to see you a minister of Christ. But let no man intrude himself into this sacred office without a gracious call.

“I know that a man may be useful to the cause of religion, while pursuing any lawful calling. \* \* I know, too, that every profession has its cares and temptations, and the Gospel ministry among the rest; but, as for myself, I had rather be a minister of the Lord Jesus, than to hold any other station that could be named. But while I say this, I know that every man has his predilections for employment, and that he ought to consult *these* among the various things which are concerned in making up his mind.”

## TO A GRANDSON.

*Dissatisfaction with College.*—“It appears to me that you must contemplate things through a false and deceptive medium, or they could never strike you as they seem to do. Undesirable objects exist everywhere, and things of unpleasant occurrence. This is the unavoidable condition of our fallen world. Go where you will, and you will meet them; do what you may, and they will pursue you, and nearly with equal success in every calling and in every place. \* \* What if the classes are twice as large in one institution as they are in another; or the students make a handsomer bow, or wear a finer coat, what has this to do with their mental improvement? It is the books they study, and the thoroughness with which they study them, together with clear and

faithful instruction on the part of teachers, that does the business. All the rest is moonshine. It may contribute more or less to our pleasurable feelings, but will count little as to our substantial improvement. \* \* Do you not err in supposing that the honor of graduating at one college, will differ materially from that of graduating at another? The question will seldom be asked, *where* did you graduate? But what are you? What your talents and attainments? What your dispositions and moral habits? After these your cotemporaries will look with eagle eye, and from every side, and, without your leave, will graduate you over again, and according to a scale of intellectual and moral excellence which they have formed for themselves."

## TO ANOTHER GRANDSON.

*The loss of a Father.*—"To you, it appears to me, this bereavement holds a language of a special character. While it calls you, with the rest of the children, to lift up your eyes to your Father in heaven, and seek an interest in his protection and friendship, it admonishes you of the relation you sustain as the elder son in the family, and the part you are called to act towards your widowed mother, and your orphan brothers and sisters. It is a comfort to me to think that you will rightly estimate your position. \* \* Love your mother—love her much; she deserves your love. Relieve her as much as possible from the burden of accumulating cares; anticipate her every want, and leave nothing undone which may tend to soften the pangs of a bereaved and aching heart. \* \* I think, my dear child, I may trust you for this and for the discharge of those duties which you owe to your afflicted brothers and sisters."

## TO HIS YOUNGEST SON.

*Integrity and Honesty.*—"When business is confided to you, attend to it with the most *sacred fidelity*. Let there be no *shuffling*, no *equivocation*, no want of punctuality. Especially in all money matters, be *exact to a farthing*. One deceitful transaction will do the business for you. Whatever may be the temptation, resolve never to depart from the high road of truth, justice and honor."

## TO THE SAME.

*Keeping out of Debt.*—To you my advice is, and always will be, keep out of debt if possible. This is the only way to maintain

one's independence, and to be in easy circumstances. The borrower is the servant of the lender, and the debtor of the creditor, the world over.

"No man can breathe freely, who owes more than he can pay when it is justly demanded. I have enjoyed life as much as most men, but I have never allowed myself to get into debt beyond the power of an early and easy liquidation. I am aware that men of business cannot always act upon this principle, but every young man should make it a point to keep within his means, and thousands in society would save themselves from the keenest torture, not to say reproach, if they would hearken to the dictates of prudence on this subject."

TO HIS SECOND SON.

*Merchandizing.*—"Suppose you were thoroughly acquainted with the value of goods, and that you knew what was best adapted to any particular market, and that you could buy and sell with as much skill as others: this is far from being the *whole* matter. There are many surprising turns and changes in mercantile affairs, to be looked out for and provided against. There needs to be a watchful and experienced eye, to guard against losses from various quarters, and to meet the pressure of engagements. I have not a particle of doubt, as to what is the wisest course for you. If possible, you ought to obtain a clerkship for another year. \* \* \* You think you have seen many things, and have had opportunity to make many observations, and do not know but you take as enlightened a view of the transactions of business, and the affairs of life generally, as you will do some five or ten years hence. When your friends see that you have *vim* to take care of yourself, they will help you. \* \* \* But what harm in making the trial? Sure enough, what harm in throwing away fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars of other people's money, and becoming a *bankrupt* in early life? \* \* \* I speak freely and plainly, but with a father's heart. You cannot know the deep interest I take in your welfare, both temporal and eternal."

TO THE SAME.

*Fidelity and regard to Providence in business.*—"I rejoice that there is a prospect of your succeeding in business. But recollect, my son, "that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet honor to men of skill." There is a Providence

which presides over the affairs of men, and without its favorable concurrence, all their efforts will be in vain. Yet God overrules the world by general laws, and his blessing is more likely to fall upon those who are diligent in the use of appropriate means. If we squander time, if we are extravagant in our expenditures, or careless and reckless in our course, we diminish the chances of our success. If, from a haste to become rich, we depart from the path of rectitude and honor, or do more business than we can do safely, by trusting those who cannot make prompt returns, we shall not only multiply our cares and anxieties, but greatly increase the probability of our ultimate failure. I am desirous that you should do well, and as one means of this, let me earnestly recommend it to you to act upon the *niciest* principles of honor and justice."

## TO THE SAME.

*Course to be pursued in days of pecuniary embarrassment.*—  
"There is not as much pressure yet in the country as in the city, though I think it begins to be felt here. \* \* I hope, my son, that you will feel the importance of acting, in these times, correctly and honorably, whatever events may befall. Keep in view your accountability to God, and never lose sight of the maxim established by the observation of ages, that "*honesty is the best policy.*" If a man fails honestly, and through sheer misfortune, everybody will sympathize with him. His creditors, if they find him correct and honorable, will treat him with more kindness, and be ready to assist him to get into business again. But if they find him not trustworthy, they will reproach him, and abandon him to his fate."

The writer may be allowed to remark, that he has enjoyed much intercourse with the son, Mr. Edward C. Richards, to whom the foregoing were addressed, and who is now engaged in a successful mercantile course in the city of New York. He has, at several distinct times, intimated to me, that though in his youth he could not appreciate the counsels of his father, in relation to business, yet experience had taught him their justice and value, and that his own success, since leaving the paternal roof, had depended on the observance of principles which his father had suggested.

TO THE SAME.

*Tour to England.*—"We cannot but regret that you have thought it necessary, in the prosecution of your business, to go to England. Yet, if it is the call of duty, we must submit to it, and commend you to that Providence which rules on the mighty ocean no less than on the land. \* \* \* I think of the dangers of the sea which you are about to encounter; but there are other dangers which will attend you in going abroad to a foreign land—dangers which arise from the society you will meet, and from the opinions and practices of those who are at war with the truth, and enemies to religion and virtue.

"Were you a true Christian, and safely sheltered in the ark which the Gospel has provided for a lost world, I could, with more composure, see you take your leave of your native shores, to await the events which may befall. As it is, I can assure you of a father's and a mother's love, and a daily remembrance in our prayers."

TO THE SAME.

*Reading.*—Do you get any time to read? I do not ask whether you acquaint yourself with the news of the day. This, almost any young man, without any great effort at husbanding his time, will be enabled to do. But do you find leisure for more *solid* reading, and for that permanent improvement which you ought to seek, as an intellectual being, and a member of an enlightened community? Above all, do you read your *Bible*, the best of all books. \* \* For instruction in *morals*, and for wisdom to direct in the *general conduct* of life, there is no book like the Bible."

TO THE SAME.

*Reverencing the Sanctuary.*—"Have you made your church location yet? and where is it? I want to see you settled in your habits in regard to this point. It involves perhaps more than you are aware of, both as to this life and that which is to come. A man's moral estimate in society is affected by his church-going habits, and no less certainly his views and impressions of the doctrines and duties of religion. I am *no bigot*, yet I should be gratified by your taking a seat in some Presbyterian church, provided your wife should be willing to accompany you. Should you prefer the Dutch church I should make no objections. \* \* There are other evangelical churches where the truth is substantially preached. *Lose no time*, my dear son, in locating yourself *somewhere*, and when located, *let not your place be empty*."



In the intercourse which Dr. Richards maintained with his children, his chief anxieties manifestly related to their spiritual and eternal interests. His correspondence, though involving wholesome counsel in all matters pertaining to this world, is stamped pre-eminently with the impress of religion. Among two hundred letters and extracts of letters submitted to the compiler, which were written to his children previous to their hopeful conversion, rarely is one to be found, where vital piety, in some form, is not distinctly recognized as a duty, while in most instances it is affectionately and solemnly urged upon their immediate attention.

The following extracts from so many letters, and which we give in the form of paragraphs, will give the reader a just view of this feature in his correspondence :

“What will you do, when you come to take your last look of the world, if you find no God and Saviour near? Our greatest wisdom is to make sure of an interest in Christ, and put ourselves over entirely into his hands. My prayer is, my dear child, that this may be your great and chief concern.”

“Not a day passes without our thinking much of you, nor do we meet around the family altar without bringing your case before the throne of eternal mercy. We wish you every comfort in this world, and above all, we are solicitous that you should choose that good part which shall not be taken from you.”

“I long to see you safely housed in the ark, before the gathering tempest shall arise and sweep away all that are without.”

“Beg of the Lord to undertake for you, and work in you mightily, to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

“You know not the anxiety I have on the subject of your salvation.”

“Oh! could you but see what I see, and realize but a little what is so apparent and overwhelming to my own mind, you would begin in earnest to sue for mercy, and never rest till your peace was made with God.”

"Does this amazing subject take hold of you? Does it stir the inner man? Does it induce the solemn purpose to make sure of the good part, the one thing needful?"

Similar appeals characterize his entire correspondence, except that the anxiety of the father's heart, and the importunity of his pen, seemed to augment as the day of probation advanced.

The following passages and extracts contemplate his children in different positions.

TO HIS ELDEST SON.

*Under Conviction.*—"In God alone your help is found. He is under no obligation to show you mercy, nor can you bring him under any by all your heartless, impenitent and unbelieving prayers; and yet if you were to say, Then I will restrain prayer, and leave the business unsolicited in his hand, I should consider you as lost. You might long since have gone down to death, and made your bed in hell, but for infinite, unmerited mercy. Let that mercy melt you. \* \* \* Depend upon it, the Lord is striving with you, which ought to be a matter of thankfulness on the one hand, and of fear and trembling on the other. \* \* \* You may be assured of a constant remembrance in my prayers. But do not trust in what your father or any other mortal or mortals can do for you. You must go to Christ, and submit yourself and your cause to him."

TO THE SAME.

*Hopeful Conversion.*—"Had God conferred on you the wealth of the Indies, it had been nothing compared with the rich display of his grace in calling you out of darkness into his marvelous light. How shall I be thankful enough for this amazing instance of Divine mercy! It is indeed sovereign, boundless and free, and indicates by its boundlessness the ocean from which it flows. Let us give thanks to his eternal name, and let our lives, distinguished by such mercy, be consecrated entirely and forever to him. \* \*

"It is well that you should be on your guard. Deception in such a case would be awful beyond expression. To avoid it, we should examine after the *grounds* of our hope, and examine *deep*. We should look to the secret springs of action, and see what it is which moves us. Whether love to God on account of his *holiness*

*nature*, as well as for his kindness to us, really inspires and influences our hearts. I should advise you to read Dr. Witherspoon, 'On the Fruits and Effects of Regeneration,' which you will find in the first volume of his works. If you can obtain the volume, read attentively and prayerfully, willing to know the *worst* as well as the best of your case. How I long to see you, and to have an opportunity of praying and blessing God together!"

## TO HIS SECOND DAUGHTER.

*Undue anxiety in adversity.*—"Great as your calamities are, they might be still greater. You might see yourself and your dear family devoted to immediate destruction in a burning ship, or buried in the ruins of a falling house smitten by a tornado. \* \* Be assured God's hand is in these events, which are apparently so disastrous to you. They make a part of that wise and holy plan, according to which from eternity he determined to govern the world; and besides, you have the promise that they shall issue in your good, if you do but patiently submit to them."

## TO THE SAME.

"You speak of your distress at the prospect of being in a state of dependence. I fear you do not feel quite right upon this subject. We ought not without great necessity to throw ourselves upon the kindness and sympathies of others; but when we can no longer help ourselves, it is a favor that others will help us, and we should thank the Lord that he provides *such* assistance, though it may not always be in a way the most congenial to our feelings. Elijah was fed by the ravens for a time, but how *clean their talons* or *delicate their bills* I know not; and when he was sent to the house of a widow who was in possession of a barrel of meal and a cruse of oil, we are not informed as to the *style of the cookery*, or the *manner in which his daily meals were served up*. It was enough that in God's way his wants were supplied."

## TO THE SAME.

*Nervous Excitability—Beating of the Heart.*—"I am strongly inclined to think that if you would ride out, in pleasant weather, especially when the *wind is at the west*, and also take exercise about your domestic matters, you would speedily find amendment in the tone of your system. \* \* You have great *beating of the heart*, I am told, and that this alarms you. So have

I had through the early part of the winter, though pretty much gone now; and the more I attended to it, the more it beat; but by pursuing the course I recommend to you, my heart now carries on its functions very quietly. Nor do I very often inquire how fast it goes; but when I do, I find it at quite a moderate pace, not more than thirty or thirty-five strokes in a minute—and since no volition of mine can alter its course, I let it alone, being thankful that it will go at all.”

## TO HIS YOUNGEST SON.

*The Work of the Ministry.*—“My prayers have been answered, my dear son, in seeing you a minister of the Lord Jesus, and regularly settled in a pastoral charge. You have taken what seemed clearly the path of duty, and there must be no looking back. Go on, my dear son, in the great work to which, I trust, the Lord has called you. Be a man of *study*, and a man of *prayer*, and you cannot fail to be useful.

“I want you — to be a much better and holier man than I have been, and to accomplish more in the cause of the Redeemer. Your lot is cast in an interesting period of the world, when much is doing for the honor of Christ, and the good of men; and you live in a part of the world where an opportunity is afforded of laying out yourself to promote the cause of truth and righteousness. \* \* Strive to live near to God, and make it a business to please and honor him. It is the *spirit* of the ministry, rather than its acquisitions and talents, that we should look at. Both are important; but the *first* pre-eminently so. Here lies the grand failure of the ministry of the present day.”

## TO THE SAME.

*Preparation of Sermons.*—“Lose no time in your preparations for the pulpit. Take some digested plan for a sermon, and begin in season, and go ahead. Labor not so much *to polish*, as to *say the right things* in the *right place*, and with the *utmost perspicuity and force*.”

## TO THE SAME.

*Public Religious Exercises.*—Let me repeat my injunction, *be short* in your *public exercises*. Do not *pray* about everything at once. When you make long prayers, let it be in your closet; but

at all times remember that we are not heard for our much speaking. In *preaching long*, especially as you write the most of your sermons, too much time and strength are necessarily expended in the preparation, and the delivery also is exhausting. If you cannot express yourself in *short-metre*, make *long-metre* of it, and cut the sermon in two."

## TO THE SAME.

*Trials of the Ministry.*—"Every Christian minister must have his trials, and God knows best what form they shall assume. Be on your guard lest your feelings should become chafed, and Satan get an advantage against you. Anything which should alienate your heart from the people of your charge, would endanger both your comfort and your usefulness. If they were as liberal and as good as they ought to be, they would *have less need of your services*. Manage the matter about — with *kindness* and *prudence*, and it will turn out well, I have no doubt. What is most important to you, and almost the *only* thing which is important, is *to give yourself to your work*. \* \* Look to God alone for all needed grace, to make you faithful, and to crown your labors with success."

But there may be those with whom what has been said of the social excellences of Dr. Richards will all go for nought. They have seen, or suppose they have seen, a blot upon his social character, which is more than an offset to all his virtues. It is reported that he was a *slaveholder*. Not a little has been said in relation to this matter, and much sensation has been produced in private circles, and also in places of public concourse. Of this matter we have Dr. Richard's own explanation, and, though dead, he may speak for himself. In a letter to Rev. Charles Merwin, an alumnus of Auburn Theological Seminary, under date of Feb. 6, 1841, he says :

"There is a colored woman, in Newark, N. J., who, according to the laws of that State, stands in the relation of a slave to me, but who, in fact, has been as *free*, for nearly twenty years, as she desired to be, or as I could make her. When I removed into this State, I gave her her choice, to accompany me to Auburn, or to stay among her friends, without any master or superior, to work

when she pleased, and play when she pleased, without any will but her own to control her. She preferred the latter, though she has since expressed her regret that she did not remain in my family. She was too old to be manumitted according to law, without bonds being given that she should not become a town charge; and when the subject of manumission was proposed to her, she utterly declined it, saying that she knew her interest too well to be made legally free at her time of life. Doubtless she judged wisely; for while she was able to work and support herself, she was perfectly at her own disposal, and had the benefit of her labor; and when she became too infirm to do this, she had a resort to her master's funds, which she has found adequate to all her necessities. She lives among her relations, who provide every comfort for her, at my order, and at my expense.

"As a friend of the colored race, what could I do more? If I had manumitted her, *with* or *against* her will, she must have gone to the poor-house in her old age, instead of living among her friends, in the most absolute ease and independence, with every want cheerfully met and supplied.

"But how came this woman into my possession, and to stand in the relation of a servant to me? It took place in consequence of her earnest request, and to promote what I then believed was her interest and my own. She was then too old to be manumitted—a thing she did not desire—but wished to change masters for many reasons, and among others to be nearer to her husband and children. Such a change would not increase the number of slaves, while it would obviously ameliorate their condition; nor could it, as I supposed, have any influence in perpetuating a state of bondage. A gradual emancipation had already been determined on, and provision made by the laws of the State for the freedom of every person to whom freedom would be a privilege. The object then sought has since been very nearly consummated. The colored people of that State, with the exception of a few aged persons, are now all free, and their freedom has been accomplished with less suffering to themselves, and with more positive benefit, than if it had been effected in a single day."

In speaking of the *mind* of Dr. Richards, the first thing to be noticed is its *energy*. From his childhood he was manifestly the subject of high purpose, or determination to make something of himself. His manly bearing in

early youth, his early and successful efforts in teaching others, his youthful address to his parents—"it is time for me to turn my attention to some calling for life"—all indicate energy of character. And when he had entered upon a course of study with a view to the Gospel ministry, though often hindered, yet he never faltered in his purpose. Like the majestic river, which either removes obstacles or rises above them, or provides for itself new channels, he fixed his eye upon the goal, and pursued his cherished aim. When disappointed, yet not discouraged—when blind, availing himself of the aid of a sister—when his wants could not be consistently supplied by his friends, resorting to teaching to aid himself—when interrupted in his course of study at college, returning to avail himself of private instructions—when visited with long, wasting sickness, yet devoting his restored health to study—often "faint, yet pursuing," until the desired object is reached. To this energy of mind, this fixedness of purpose, this indomitable zeal in carrying an object, or, in other words, to this determination *to be something*, more than to any other one cause, we ascribe, under God, the eminence which he reached. He stands forth before the world a *self-educated man*—as one of the few who have attained not only professional excellence, but high attainment in general knowledge, in spite of the most serious interruptions and embarrassments connected with an early course of study.

In the mind of Dr. Richards the *reasoning faculty* was also well developed. He had imagination, and might have soared and dwelt among the "heights," but his taste did not lead him to try his pinions. Besides, his duties, especially for the last part of his life, were more concerned with the "depths." His intellectual pursuits looked to the development and elucidation of substantial truth, and few uninspired men have been more successful in finding this pearl of great price. "A wise man," says Solomon,

“will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.” The mind that seeks truth supremely, which pursues it deliberately and patiently, which comprehends its relations and dependences, and which weighs objections against it in “even balances,” gives the fairest promise of success in its pursuit. Such, we think, was the mind of Dr. Richards. Its entire construction was such as to render him a close and successful reasoner. The candor, patience, deliberation and common sense which came in to aid the perceptive and reasoning faculties, secured to them a clearness of comprehension, and a strength and majesty of movement, and a correctness of conclusion which will place his name among the greatest lights of his age. Even those who may call in question his philosophical principles and deductions, or his expositions of the Scriptures, will not withhold the acknowledgment that his defence of his own positions is the defence of masterly power. It may also be noticed that while Dr. Richards was no inventor of new and fanciful theories, and while he took no pleasure in differing with good men in opinion, yet his mind pursued its investigations with remarkable *independence*. He received nothing on the simple assertion of any man. He examined everything for himself. He often inclined to a system as a *whole*, without endorsing *every* thing which might be regarded as belonging to it, thus receiving what, to his mind, seemed according to truth, and rejecting the rest, whoever might be the author. Thus he was a Calvinist of the Edwardean School. He was accustomed to say that “he did not like to differ from Edwards.” Yet he was no slave to the opinions of Edwards, and endorsed not a sentiment of that great man, unless, upon examination, he was led to regard it as in accordance with eternal truth. So he was, on the whole, a *New School* man, but he was far from defending everything which



might go under the New School name. It will be found that his views on several important topics differ from the extremes of the Old School and New.

But the mind of Dr. Richards was distinguished for nothing more than for its *strong common sense*. To appreciate this, you are to look at the age in which he lived. He was young when the Church began to awake to the wants of a dying world; and his early ministry was connected with the birth of many of the philanthropic and benevolent institutions of the land. His life as a professor, too, was passed in the midst of much agitation and excitement. At such times, men are apt to betake themselves to extremes. They are Old School or New School, without reserve. They either go with the current, or stand still and hold back. They either make doctrine everything, or practice everything. They make the missionary cause a hobby; or temperance, or the cause of the slave, and regard with comparative indifference, other forms of benevolence and philanthropy. Now, what is wanting, is, that good men, and especially leaders in the "sacramental host," should keep their balance; that they shall go neither too fast nor too slow; that they shall give everything not only *a* place, but its *proper* place. In a word, that they shall be "ready for every good word and work." Such a "balance of mind" is not only the "better part of valor," but in the Christian pastor, or theological professor, a requisite, second only to humble piety. Of a mind thus balanced, it is believed, that the last half or three-fourths of a century has not presented a happier example than was found in Dr. Richards. He discovered the relations of things almost by intuition, and predicted tendencies and results with the accuracy of a prophet. When he sought an end, he selected means which would secure it, without "subjecting his good to be evil spoken of." When conducting Zion through the interesting scenes of a re-

vival, no drawbacks upon the good accomplished resulted from a "zeal not according to knowledge."

This feature in his intellectual character, contributed to the wisdom and weight of his *counsels*, in the different relations and emergencies of life. As a father, as a pastor, and as a guide and teacher of youth, he rarely gave a word of advice, which did not, sooner or later, prove itself "a word fitly spoken." In the highest judicatories of the church, when matters of great interest were involved in perplexity, and when "much speaking" seemed to "darken counsel," or furnish no light, a few words from the modest lips of Dr. Richards, have proved like the breaking forth of the setting sun-beams, after a day of clouds and storms.

This feature of his mind also proved an effectual preventive of imposition and circumvention. He read the intentions of men from their conduct, with great accuracy. Though he was unsuspicious, yet no man within the range of his observation could pursue a zig-zag course, and escape the notice of his eye. And the man who undertook by stratagem, to circumvent him, or injure his reputation and influence, either abandoned the enterprise in discouragement, or closed it in disgraceful defeat. Efforts of this kind were made at different periods of his public life, and in some instances, enlisting much talent and influence; and, were it wise to expose the snares which were laid for his feet, and the manner in which they were escaped, elucidation would be furnished of a sagacity with which it is not safe to contend. "To steady opposition," says his colleague Dr. Mills, "he was the most *impracticable* man I ever knew. At the outset, his opponents might honestly think themselves right, but they soon would find themselves in the wrong by the estimation of others, and what is apt to be more provoking, *by their own*. They might please themselves with calling him the "old fox;" but they never *caught* him.

As a *Christian*, Dr. Richards was humble, prayerful, and full of sympathy with the cause of Christ. Like Brainerd and Edwards, he cherished the most abasing views of his own moral character. He was once asked, "Do you suppose that you have ever, for a moment, loved God as much as you ought?" and his immediate answer was, "No, NOT A THOUSANDTH PART:" and *burst into tears*. In his religious character, which, on the whole, was one of great symmetry, there was, perhaps, more of the anxious than the hopeful and joyous. Says Dr. Cox, one of his colleagues in Auburn :

"He sometimes evinced anxiety of a peculiar kind. It was not that his hope was shaken or gloomed either objectively or subjectively ; but it arose from a tender apprehension of the great crisis of the dying hour, of the importance of glorifying Christ in his exit from the world, the desirableness of recommending his religion to survivors, his conscious need of special grace in that great solemnity of untried being! He would say to me, Oh ! that I may have the full and copious help of the Holy Ghost when I come to die—a supply of the spirit of Christ !"

Dr. Richards loved and cherished the spirit of prayer. He regarded it as the "Christian's vital breath." His attitude in his private devotions, especially during the latter part of his life, was standing ; and often, with his hands placed upon the mantle-piece of his study, he was found wrestling with the angel of the covenant. An inmate of his family relates an instance in which his countenance so indicated an abstraction of mind from earth and his sweet communion with God, as to remind her of Moses on the holy mount "in audience with the Deity."

He laid great stress upon prayer as giving life and efficacy to all other means of grace. In times of trial and darkness in the Church he went often to his closet, and recommended to others earnest and importunate appeal to the mercy-seat, as furnishing the richest pro-

mise of needed relief. Says one, "Division and strife in the Church were to him as 'a thorn in the flesh;' and while others litigated and thundered anathemas, this man of God was on his knees, weeping over the afflictions of Joseph, and praying for the peace of Zion."

The depth and power of his pious sympathies, were peculiarly developed in connection with revivals of religion and the benevolent movements of the age.

"My acquaintance with him," says the Rev. G. N. Judd, "commenced in the winter of 1817. It was a time of general religious interest in the town of Newark, especially among the people of his pastoral charge. I shall never forget the intense interest and heavenly unction which characterized his conversation, his preaching and his prayers. \* \*

"It was evident that he felt a deep interest in the salvation of men everywhere. No one could doubt this who enjoyed the privilege of listening to his prayers. They were characterized by a tenderness of spirit, a depth of feeling, a divine emotion, and a power of entreaty, decidedly evidential of intense desire and strong faith in God, as the hearer of prayer."

The writer of the above refers to a meeting of Presbytery in Morristown, at the time of a powerful revival of religion, and speaks of Dr. Richards, who was present, as follows:

"The deep fountains of feeling in his bosom were evidently moved. He offered the prayer which preceded the delivery of the Presbyterial sermon, and made an address at a meeting in the evening which was appropriated to exhortation and prayer. Both of these performances were characterized by a sense of the presence, majesty, and holiness of God, and the worth of the soul, such as I have seldom, if ever, witnessed."

A co-presbyter of the writer, Rev. C. Merwin, says:

"Soon after leaving the Seminary, I went to him for advice, during an awakening among the people of my charge. I told him of the solemn interest which pervaded my congregation, and of the tokens of God's presence. THE TEARS STOLE RAPIDLY DOWN HIS

FURROWED CHEEKS, AS HIS SOUL SEEMED TO EXULT IN THE PROSPERITY OF GOD'S CAUSE."

It may be added that Dr. Richards "devised liberal things" for the kingdom of Christ. His agency was concerned not only in the origin of many of the benevolent institutions of the age, but in sustaining them to the last, by his charities, and prayers, and labors. Nothing more gladdened his heart as a pastor, than the increase of that spirit among his people which looks to the *conversion of the world*; and as a Professor, nothing is noted in his correspondence with the friends of the Seminary with greater joy than the spirit evinced among his pupils to go to "the waste places" of our American Zion, or carry the Gospel upon their lips to "the isles of the sea," and to preach "Christ where he had not been named."

As a *theologian* Dr. Richards held a high place in the estimation of the Christian public. His profession not only, but taste and habits of instructing young men in their course preparatory to the ministry, led his mind much in the direction of theological study. The general character of his religious opinions is well intimated in the language of Dr. Woods, of Andover: "He *thought*, and felt, and preached, as the ministers of Connecticut did 40 years ago, and as the ministers of New England generally do now. His religious experience substantially agreed with the experience of such men as Edwards, Brainerd and Bellamy; and his theological belief corresponded with his experience. And when I say this, I mean to say that his belief and his religious experience were conformed to the Word of God." His views were clear and comprehensive. He saw the relations and mutual dependences of the Gospel system; and with much care and skill assigned to each particular truth its own proper place. Primary truths were well distinguished, both in relation to each other, and in relation to those which are only secondary; and his body of

divinity, like the natural body, was "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth."

As a polemic, Dr. Richards was skillful, and no less candid than skillful. He read or heard opposing views patiently, stated them fairly, and then discussed them in such a manner as to secure the respect of his opponent, if not to convince him of error. "It was remarkable," says one, "that his opposition to error and disorder was made with a spirit so respectful, and kind and gentle, that he did not lose the esteem and friendship of those from whom he differed."

There are some things which have a degree of importance in the preacher, in which the subject of this sketch was excelled. He never prepared his sermons with any reference to the "enticing words of man's wisdom." For polishing, he found neither time nor disposition. Nor was he equal to some of his brethren in gracefulness of manner. It was evident that in relation to these matters, either he had never made himself familiar with highly-finished models, or if so, that he was not particularly careful to copy them. But in strong thought clothed with appropriate diction, in giving to the trumpet a certain sound, in bringing from the Gospel treasure things both new and old, in presenting truth with perspicuity, in giving to each hearer his own portion in due season, and in applying truth pungently and faithfully, Dr. Richards had few equals in the American Church. He selected his themes, arranged his plans, chose his forms of expression, and delivered his message with the *obvious* aim to make his hearers understand, and induce them to receive and obey the truth. Hence there was no mere *show* of learning in the pulpit, but everything was suited as well to instruct the unlettered, as to interest and edify the most highly-furnished minds. He never discussed a doctrine dryly; but after a fair statement, and ~~clear~~ elucidation, brought it to bear upon the hearer.

matter of deep practical interest, and as furnishing the highest motives for holy confidence and obedience. His presentation of the preceptive and experimental parts of the Gospel, constituted a bright and faithful mirror, in which his hearers could learn what was their own spiritual character. There was also much less inequality in his ordinary exhibitions of truth, than often obtains among those who are regarded as eminent preachers. There are those in the Christian ministry who are capable of great efforts, who, nevertheless, sometimes feed their flocks with mere declamation, or at best, with tame and moderate sermons. Dr. Richards was more equal in the distribution of his power; or, at least, he avoided the sinking extreme, which certainly is the least desirable. "As a preacher," says the Hon. T. Frelinghuysen, "he was sound, practical, instructive, *always* interesting, and *often* eloquent. The great themes which he discussed, and the deep concern he felt for the salvation of his hearers, were so earnestly and solemnly urged, that no one could mistake his convictions or his purpose."

As a Professor of Theology, Dr. Richards was well furnished, apt to teach, punctual and patient. His studies, as we have already remarked, were mainly subordinate to the range of instruction which he was called to impart. This principle was closely adhered to until the close of his life. Many of his lectures were frequently re-written. Every sentiment was carefully and frequently examined, and the phraseology and form in which that sentiment was conveyed, was studied with a view to its conveying precisely the author's sentiments to the minds of his pupils. About two years before his death, in a letter to his daughter he says :

"Could I favor myself as much as I really ought at my time of life, I think I should enjoy comfortable health. But it is difficult to do this. If I have classes I must hear them; if I hear them *I must be prepared.*"

\*As an instructor he was remarkably *punctual*. Hours

devoted to recitation he regarded as sacredly due to his pupils, and he never withheld or curtailed them for trifling reasons. The following incident illustrates his fidelity at this point. He was in his study, in the midst of a lively conversation with a brother in the ministry, when the Seminary bell rang for recitation. His friend expressed his regret at the interruption, and seemed inclined to protract the interview with the Professor. But it was a question to be "taken without debate." He immediately rose from his seat, excused himself, took his hat and papers, and retired.

His manner of demolishing the false positions and reasonings of his pupils, was marked by great gentleness and kindness. He never aimed to "break down" a student, however tenacious in sustaining a wrong position, but to *undermine* him and let him fall of himself; and, for the most part, the fall was so gentle that the shame of being vanquished on the part of the pupil was lost in his admiration of the skill of his teacher. Rev. N. W. Fisher, a classmate of the writer, says :

"I never shall forget a circumstance that occurred soon after I joined our class. The question to be answered was, Whether conscience always dictated right? I took the position that it did, and maintained it with a force of argument probably unusual for a tyro. This brought me in collision with the Doctor, who took opposite ground. For want of time the debate ended before it was finished. About nine o'clock in the evening following a rap was heard at my door, when who should appear but the Doctor. Not satisfied with the manner in which the debate had ended in the recitation-room, he sought this opportunity to resume the subject. The discussion continued till near midnight. I listened with profound admiration to his arguments, and was pleased with the evidence he gave of his anxiety, not so much to triumph, as to arrive at the truth and convince me of my error. He foresaw, probably, that it would influence other points in theology, and he seemed intensely anxious that I should be set right. I must confess that my position had to give way, and my views have been different ever since."

With the substantial qualities of a teacher he also



commanded, at will, those which are *sprightly* and *humorous*. Few men could invent a pithy form of thought, or draw a happy comparison, or recall an apposite anecdote with greater facility. In the use of such illustrations he judged well as to time and place. If he seemed to descend, it was not at the expense of his own dignity or the respect of his pupils. If the garb in which a point was dressed was *homely*, and perhaps *too* homely for the popular ear, yet amid the familiarities of the recitation-room it was not only lawful, but highly agreeable and instructive. What son of Auburn Seminary has forgotten the ability of Dr. Richards to relieve the tedium of a long recitation, or dry discussion. Some of us, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, can well remember the very grateful convulsions which were created by the corruscations of his mighty intellect. Under the sallies of his sprightliness and strong common sense, we forgot our *dyspepsy*, and even the evil genius of the *hypochondriac* was sometimes dislodged and compelled to take his departure for a season.

It is worthy also to be noticed, that his instructions, especially in the experimental parts of theology, were often characterized by an *unction* and *warmth of feeling*, by which he carried the sympathies of his class, and secured to his pupils a deeper and livelier impression of truth than they had ever before felt. An instance of this kind occurred a short time before his death, while illustrating the nature of that act of the mind and heart by which a sinner first embraces Christ as his Saviour. In illustrating this point he referred the class to his own experience in conversation, and the manner in which, from step to step, his mind was led.

“As the venerable Professor proceeded in the narrative,” says a member of the class, “his heart warmed in the remembrance of the circumstances and feelings connected with his conversion. He leaned forward, then rose from his seat, and with extended arms and flowing tears, ascribed his change to sovereign grace, and declared that his first act of faith was submission to the throne.

Would that I could recall all his language. The power of this living testimony carried conviction to our hearts, and we received impressions which will help us to understand and preach the truth, and which we shall carry with us to our graves."

In the foregoing sketch of the life of Dr. Richards, we believe that no feature has been overdrawn; yet we do not claim that he had attained perfection. He ever cherished a deep sense of his deficiency in all things, especially in the Christian virtues. Though he had no sympathy with the doctrine that sinless perfection is attained in this life, yet he believed that others came nearer to "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God" than himself. It may be said, however, that in his private, social and professional character, he was a man of uncommon excellence, and a distinguished light in the Church of God. We heartily endorse the following tribute to his memory, by his colleague, the Rev. Dr. Mills, as given in his funeral discourse: "But had he then no faults? it may be asked. And if by the question be meant whether he had not some unhappy obliquity of temper, some habitual frailty, such as too often, even in men of general excellence, must be remembered with regret by surviving friends, and which they would gladly forget and hide from view—if this be meant, we answer, we know of no such faults in him whose loss we mourn. A character whose *whole* exhibited such symmetry, such consistency, it is seldom our privilege to meet."

But no degree of intellectual or moral worth is security against the power of death. But "he that believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live." We cherish this precious hope with regard to our lamented and honored father. He has died but to live. A star of the first magnitude has disappeared, only to shine on a wider and higher orbit. What a constellation of such stars is gathering in heaven! How bright their glories!



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LECTURES

ON

MENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

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## LECTURE I.

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### ON THE WILL.

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THERE are few subjects either more important or more difficult than those which pertain to the *Will*. From time immemorial they have furnished themes of the most ardent controversy, on which men of the profoundest learning and talent have exhausted their powers. It would require a volume only to name the points in debate, without touching upon the arguments alleged for and against the opinions advanced.

Among the leading questions which have been disputed are, *What is the will*, considered as a faculty or principle of the mind? *What are its phenomena? and in what order developed? Is it free? and what does its freedom involve? What determines the will? Is it determined by its own efficiency? or by something external to it? or both? How far do virtue and vice depend on the will? And is moral character predicable of all its acts, or of some only?*

Our object is not to take up these inquiries in their order, nor exactly to confine our remarks to what belongs to them; but to give our views on the more essential points in this controversy, and to show occasionally what Edwards has taught in relation to these topics. We shall advert frequently to him, not because we pin our faith upon his sleeve, great and good as he was, nor because

we wish others to do it, but for the purpose of awakening a desire carefully to investigate his principles, believing he has done more than any other man in exploring the basis of human obligation, and in reconciling the responsibility of man with the predeterminate counsel of God. At all events, we consider him both scriptural and safe. Besides, his argument on the freedom of the will is unrivaled for its depth, its ingenuity and power, his opponents themselves being judges; and it can scarcely fail to be a useful discipline to *our* minds, thoroughly to study this development of *his*.

## WHAT IS THE WILL?

According to this writer, "It is that by which the mind chooses anything. And the faculty of the will is that faculty, power or principle of the mind, by which it is capable of choosing. An act of the will is an act of choice."

Some have thought it a better definition to say, "That the will is that by which the soul *chooses* or *refuses*." But Edwards contents himself with saying, it is that by which the soul chooses, because in every act of the will he supposes the mind chooses *one* thing rather than *another—something*, rather than the *want* of it—its *existence*, rather than its *non-existence*. So in *refusing*, the mind chooses the *absence* of the thing refused. With the *positive* and *negative* set before it, it chooses the *negative*. Call the act of the will, therefore, by what name you please—*choosing, refusing, approving, disapproving, liking, disliking, embracing, rejecting, determining, directing, commanding, forbidding, inclining or being averse to, being pleased or displeased with*—all may be reduced to that of *choosing*. Hence, for the soul to act *voluntarily*, is always to act *electively*.

Some have made a distinction between *willing* and *preferring*. Mr. Locke says, "A man may *prefer flying*

to walking; yet he never *wills* it, because he knows it to be impossible." The will, he thinks, is never called into exercise but in relation to our operative powers, and when something is to be done, or not done; of course, that the will always terminates on some act of our own, either bodily or mental, and some act which we take to be in our power. Reid, Stewart and Chalmers coincide with him in this opinion. *Preferring*, according to these philosophers, sometimes expresses an act of the will, yet not always, and only when it relates to some action of our own which we regard as *practicable*. Edwards takes a different view of this subject. He supposes *willing* and *preferring* are the same thing, being always acts of the same faculty—in other words, that every preference is a choice, and every choice an act of the will. As to *flying*, he holds that a man may be said *indirectly* and remotely to choose it, though he never chooses to put forth any bodily exertion in order to fly. With respect to *walking*, it is different. Here the next and immediate object of choice is the alteration of the bodily organs, with the view to an end, and with the expectation of accomplishing that end. If the man be at rest, and *prefers* walking, he determines to make an immediate use of his bodily organs for that purpose. If already in the act of walking, he *wills* to *continue* or to *suspend* the action of these organs, as is most agreeable to him. But his *will*, in this case, is neither more nor less than his *choice*, though the choice immediately terminates on an object different from that in the case of flying. He who *prefers* flying to walking, *chooses* between two modes of conveyance, considered simply in themselves, and without taking into view the question whether they are alike in his power; but he makes *no effort* to fly, and he chooses none, and inclines to none, because he knows it would be *unavailing*. Of course, his choice in this case is not *immediate* and *direct*, but *remote* and

*indirect*: still he chooses, and this choice is an act of the will, though not such an act, attended by such circumstances, as when he chooses to *walk*.

The doctrine of Edwards is, that *preferring to fly* and *willing to walk* are both acts of choice, both exercises of one and the same faculty, the faculty of the will; and that the only difference between them lies in the different objects on which the choice terminates, and the circumstances attending it.

Still, we hold it right to admit that the customary use of language, which determines its propriety, will not allow us to use the terms *willing* and *preferring* as if they were precisely synonymous. To *will* is a stronger term than to *choose* or to *prefer*, and is more commonly applied to those acts of choice which immediately respect our own actions. I cannot correctly say, *I will meat*, *I will drink*, or *I will veal* instead of mutton; but I may say, I *prefer* the one to the other. It would be bad English for a man to say, *I will to be* as fleet as the *roe*, or as strong as the *lion*; but he might correctly say, *I should like to be*, or should *prefer to be*. Things which are not at my option are not properly in my power; and though I may indirectly choose or prefer them, I cannot according to correct usage say, I *will* or *purpose* them. These terms more appropriately relate to some action of mine, and some action for some end. But if either the action or the end be deemed impossible, it would be contrary to the law of my rational nature to will or purpose in the case. So far, then, as the mere use of terms is concerned, it would seem that we always *prefer* what we *will*, but do not always *will* what we *prefer*—custom having limited the terms willing and volition to that class of our feelings or desires which terminate immediately on some action of our own.

The examples given by President Edwards do not militate against this. He asks, indeed, "If a man's



choosing, liking best, or being pleased with a thing, are not the same as willing that thing, according to these general and natural notions which men have upon this subject? Thus an act of the will is commonly expressed by its pleasing a man to do thus or thus; and a man's doing as he will, or doing as he pleases, are the same thing in common speech." But who does not see that in these examples some act of our own is concerned, as that on which the will terminates? Here is a man *doing* as he wills, and *doing* as he pleases—and its pleasing him to *do* thus or thus. Something then, it seems, in all these cases, is to be *done*. Some action, bodily or mental, is contemplated as that on which the will terminates.

Such forms of speech, though they settle nothing ultimately, yet as far as they go, seem to limit the act of willing to something to be done or not done; to something as the fruit or effect of willing; or rather they show that the phrase *to will* is not so wide a term as *to prefer*, the former being limited by custom to our own personal acts. President Edwards, in his Treatise on the Affections, admits this, though he contends, and may contend justly, that all our *desires*, *choices*, *preferences* and *affections*, are exercises of one and the same faculty—the faculty of *will*.

Locke makes a distinction, also, between *will* and *desire*, maintaining that they are different states of mind, and may often run counter to each other. To prove this, he gives the following example: "A man, I cannot deny, may oblige me to use persuasions with another, which, at the time I am speaking, I may wish may not prevail upon him." In this case, he thinks it plain that *will* and *desire* run counter. "I will the action that tends one way, whilst my desire tends another, and that the direct contrary way." Such instances, Edwards remarks, do not prove the *will* to be different from *desire*, or that *one* can be opposed to the *other*. *Will*, he admits to be a term

of larger signification than *desire*; but denies that a man's *will* and *desire* can ever oppose each other, where the objects on which they terminate are precisely the same. If the objects are different, then *will* may be opposed to *will*, and *desire* to *desire*. In this we think him right—right as to the facts in the case, and right in saying that such examples as given by Mr. Locke do not prove a diversity between *will* and *desire*. But we might ask, do they prove the contrary? The question is still open to debate, and cannot be settled, we imagine, by an appeal to the ordinary use of terms. I may admit that, according to the *usus loquendi*, a certain class of our feelings, or states of mind, may more appropriately be called *volitions*, or acts of will, than a certain other class, which, nevertheless, I hold to be exercises of the will, and therefore volitions, though not usually so denominated. I may contend that all our desires are but so many developments of the will, showing its inclination or disinclination to the objects in view, and still allow that many of them are not commonly called *volitions*, though truly and properly acts of will.

The point at issue between Locke and Edwards was simply this: whether all our desires, of whatever form or character, are exercises of will, or that *class of desires* only, which immediately relate to our actions, bodily or mental. Mr. Locke maintained that the *will* is conversant only with our operative powers, and therefore, call its exercise *desire* or *choice*, or what you will, it never acts but in the *direction* of our operative faculties. Consequently he allows nothing to be a *volition* or *act of will*, but some desire or choice of the mind, which terminates on some action of our own. While, in opposition to him, President Edwards contends that the *will* is immediately concerned in all our *desires*, *choices*, *preferences*, *likes* and *dislikes*, let them be directed to what object they may: though he admits they do not so commonly *act*.

of *volitions*, except where they relate to some action for some end. He was well aware of the customary use of language, but he did not suppose that this use could settle the deep and recondite principles of philosophy, whether *physical* or *moral*. It might determine what are the commonly-received opinions of men, but could do little in deciding whether those opinions were *well* or *ill* founded. He chose, therefore, to examine for himself, and to judge of the *powers* of the mind by the *states* of the mind; and of *these states*, as they appeared to his own consciousness. Whether he formed a correct judgment, it is the privilege of every one to inquire. Dr. Brown, Mr. Payne, and a multitude of others, coincide with him. Reid, Stewart, Chalmers, and the Scotch Metaphysicians generally, agree with Mr. Locke. They consider our desires and affections only as *incentives* to volition, not as volitions themselves. Yet we might ask, what is a volition but a desire? a desire of one thing rather than another with which it is compared? and what is such a desire but a choice? which surely must be an act of the will, or of the elective faculty. When I raise my hand to my head, by a simple act of volition, what more am I conscious of, so far as the mental process is concerned, than that I *desire* it, rather than the contrary? Do you say that I desire it for some end, and that I believe it practicable? We grant that these are circumstances connected with the *desire*, and may be necessary to call it into being. But the desire itself, apart from these circumstances, appears no otherwise to my consciousness than any other desire; or if there be a difference, it is no other than what is occasioned by the object on which it terminates. The *desire* of *wealth* and the *desire* of *fame* both flow from the same power or susceptibility of mind; yet, to our consciousness, they seem somewhat different, as the objects are different which excite them; and this, perhaps, is true of that entire class of feelings which we denominate

affections; though springing from the same general power and susceptibility of mind, they assume to us different aspects, chiefly from the fact that they are awakened by different objects.

Allow me here to remark, that while President Edwards takes the terms *willing* and *choosing* in so comprehensive a sense as to include all the desires and inclinations of the mind, he makes no attempt to show the correctness of this doctrine, except what appears in his brief answer to Mr. Locke. Perhaps he thought it enough to rest in the popular and long-received opinion on the subject, until some one was able to set it aside, or at least should make a more promising effort for this purpose than Mr. Locke had apparently done. It has also been noticed as rather a singular fact, that while Edwards takes this broad ground with respect to the nature and operation of the will, he seldom alludes to it in the first three parts of his great work on the subject of the will. His illustrations are almost uniformly taken from what are, by way of distinction, called *deliberate acts of the will*, that is to say, those acts which contemplate something to be done or not done. This might be the best ground on which to meet his opponents, and perhaps, from the tenor of their sentiments and the nature of their warfare, it was absolutely necessary that this course should be taken. Yet one can hardly help wishing that he had paid more attention to those primary states of mind, from which the deliberate and imperate acts of the will proceed; enough, at least, to inform us how far he supposed his doctrine concerning one class of volitions would hold true with respect to the other.

There is no room to doubt, however, that he considered *willing* and *desiring* the same thing, and not different things—the mere development of the same faculty. Of course, that no man *wills* what he does not *desire*, nor *desires* what he does not *will*, when the same and not

different objects are regarded. Hence, all our inclinations and affections are considered by him as exercises of the will. This appears from many parts of the work to which we have already alluded, but is distinctly discussed in his Treatise on the Affections. Thus on page 124: "The affections," he says, "are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the will: that God has endowed the soul with two faculties—one, that by which it is capable of perception or speculation; or by which it *discerns, views* and *judges* of things: this is called the *understanding*. The other is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is in some way inclined, with respect to the things it views and considers; either is inclined to them, or is disinclined, or averse from them: or it is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things as an indifferent and unaffected spectator; but either as *liking* or *disliking, pleased* or *displeased, approving* or *rejecting*." "This faculty," he adds, "is called by various names. It is sometimes called the inclination, and as it has respect to the actions which are governed by it, it is called the *will*; and the *mind*, with regard to the exercise of this faculty, is called the *heart*. The *will* and the affections of the soul are not two faculties; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will and inclination of the soul, but only in the liveliness and sensibleness of the exercise." He confesses "that language on this subject is somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words, in a considerable measure, loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some sense the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination; for the will is never, in any exercise, any farther than it is affected.\* It is not moved

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\* Nor the understanding either.

out of a state of perfect indifference any otherwise than as it is affected one way or other, and acts nothing any farther. But yet, there are many actings of the will and inclination that are not so commonly called *affections*. In everything we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclination that governs us in our actions;\* but all the actings of the inclination and will, all our common actions in life, are not ordinarily called *affections*. Yet what *are* called *affections* are not essentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise. In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either *likes* or *dislikes*, is either *inclined* or *disinclined* to what is in view; and these are not essentially different from the *affections* of love and hatred. That *liking* or *inclination* of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, or vigorous, is the same thing as the *affection* of love; and that *disliking* or *disinclining*, if (it be) in a great degree, is the same with hatred."

All this is exceedingly explicit, so far as the opinions of this great man are concerned. He undoubtedly believed that all the inclinations and desires of the soul, towards the various objects in view, are properly *acts* or *exercises* of the will—though not all denominated *volitions* in the common acceptation of the word. "There are many actings of the will, which are not commonly called *affections*." What actings are these? and what are they usually called? They are such actings as are concerned in the common actions of life—*actions* brought about by a direct *act* of the will, or purpose; and these *actings*, every one knows, are usually called *volitions*. Yet such *volitions* are not ordinarily called *affections*; nor are the *affections* ordinarily called *volitions*—but in Edwards' view, they are all alike *acts* or *exercises* of will. He could see no difference in that power or principle of the

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\* Mr. Locke would say that the will is exercised in nothing else.

mind, which directs and governs our mental and bodily actions, and that power or principle which is *pleased* or *displeased*, with any object presented to the mind's view. In the one case the soul is *pleased* or *displeased* with a proposed *action*, as the next and immediate object of choice : in the other, with an *object* which is not an action—at least not an action of our own, proposed to be *done* or *forborne*. In both cases there is *liking* or *disliking*, *embracing* or *rejecting*, *choosing* or *refusing*, and to what power or principle of the mind, he would ask, can any of these things be referred, but to the will? The objects which occasion them may be different, and the circumstances and results different; but in themselves what are they? but the various developments of one and the same faculty, the will?

At the same time it has been common, and we intend to show that it is important, to distinguish one class of volitions from another. Those which terminate on some action of our own, have been called *deliberate* acts—and imperate acts of the will, and not unfrequently determinate acts—because they are more the result of deliberation, and determine and govern the action on which they fix; while *those* which contemplate no action as their immediate result, are called *immanent* acts of the will. They remain in the mind, and do not flow out into action.

It is of little importance by what names these two classes of volitions are distinguished, provided the terms agreed on be well understood and carefully remembered; but in our apprehension it is immensely important to the cause of truth, that the *volitions themselves* be distinguished. Though admitted to be *exercises* of the same faculty, and to be phenomena of the same generic character, yet they are clothed with very different circumstances; and we shall find, upon examination, that what is true of the one

is not always true of the other, and that in several important particulars.

*First.* As we have seen already, it is true of the *deliberate* or *imperate* acts of the will, that they always stand connected with our operative faculties, and terminate on some action of our own which we take to be in our power; whereas, immanent acts of the will never thus terminate. They never fix on something to be done, or not done, and consequently never flow out in action of any kind—except so far as they may become incentives to action, and thus influence the will in its deliberative and determinate acts.

*Second.* Virtue and vice are primarily and properly predicable only of *immanent volitions*, or *acts of will*. They are the seat of all *culpability* and *praiseworthiness*; while the deliberate acts of the will do not *constitute*, but merely indicate, the moral character of the agent.

We take it, there is no one common sense notion better established than this. If the moral affections are right, the actions will be right, and the deliberate acts of the will, from which these actions immediately proceed. If the moral affections be wrong, they will give birth to purposes and acts which are wrong. This is so obvious as a general statement, that there seems no room for doubt or disputation. For it is neither more nor less than saying that when the heart is right all will be right, and *vice versa*. Yet, when we come to inquire into the matter, we find no person attributing moral qualities to the *external action*, disconnected with the volition which produced it, nor to the *volition*, apart from the motive or feeling which excited it. We ask, indeed, if the *action was voluntary*? because, if it were merely *accidental*, or not intended, it could not *indicate* a state of moral feeling of any kind, nor be the legitimate expression of any. But when we have ascertained that the action was *voluntary*,



we are not prepared to pronounce on the character of the agent, until we know the *motive* by which his volition in the case was dictated. If this was *virtuous*, we pronounce the *agent virtuous*; if this was sinful, we pronounce him to be sinful. Thus we always judge of character by the state of the moral affections, or the disposition of the agent; and could we know *these, previous* to the deliberate acts of the will, and to the actions which that will occasions, we should form precisely the same judgment of men's character, *before* they have *willed* or *acted*, as *afterwards*. By the very constitution of our minds, we are led to refer the *merit* and *demerit* of every action to the state of the heart whence it originated. On this ground it is, that the Scriptures declare, "That he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and he that looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The language of God's law is, "Thou shalt not *covet*," and the sacred precept is broken whenever the covetous feeling arises, though the purpose to gratify it should never be formed. To form such a purpose would *indicate* the *reality*, and perhaps the *strength* and *permanency* of the feeling; yet the moral *obliquity* lies not in the *purpose*, any more than in the *hand* which executes the purpose. This must be traced up to the heart, or to the corrupt feelings which gave birth to the purpose, and which the purpose presupposes and *indicates*. Again:

*Third.* When it is said, "*a man can if he will, or he could if he would, or he may if he pleases*," we must understand in all *such* cases, that a *deliberate act* of the will is spoken of; for such phrases can have no application to an *immanent* act. An *immanent* act of the will contemplates no action as its fruit and consequent, and is followed by none; consequently, *no action*, or power of action, is suspended upon it. This is true only of *deliberative* and *determinate acts* of the will. And yet how often will you

hear from the pulpit and elsewhere, such forms of expression as these : "You can love God, *if you will*—and hate sin, *if you will*—and repent, *if you will*!"—a language improper, on several accounts. First, it supposes, contrary to fact, that *love to God*, and *hatred to sin*, and *sorrow for it*, arise in the mind in consequence of some antecedent act, immediately *willing*, and purposing these affections ; whereas, among philosophers and metaphysicians it is a conceded point, that they never arise in this manner, but are always *spontaneous*—rising up in view of the objects on which they terminate, and which are their true causes or antecedents. This language is improper, in the second place, because it makes a *voluntary* state of mind, or *volition itself*, the thing *immediately* willed—and which involves the absurdity of *willing* to *will*—an occurrence which nobody supposes to be practicable. But, thirdly, were it practicable to will an *affection*, or voluntary state of mind, into being, it must be willed for some end, which is agreeable or pleasing to the agent. What shall that end be ? Say I will to love God : Is it because the love of God is an affection in itself agreeable to me ? then I possess it already, and do not will it into being, since it had gained existence anterior to my willing. Or do I will to love God for some selfish end, believing that it might contribute to my future welfare ? Can any man suppose that such a selfish act would beget true love to God ? or make the least approximation towards it ? No stream can flow higher than its fountain. What begins in selfishness must end in selfishness ; as all experience shows, and all analogy demonstrates. But the point to which we wish to draw your attention, is the difference which exists between the *deliberate* acts of the will, and the *immanent* acts ; the one *always* contemplating some action as its immediate fruit and effect—and the other, never. Hence it is proper, with respect to one class of volitions, to say you can

do thus or thus, *if you will*, or you can do this or that, *if you would*; because in such cases you speak of an *action*, which would follow as the immediate consequent of volition, and which is suspended upon that volition; but there is no propriety in such language when applied to the other class of volitions—that is, to the *immanent* acts of the will; for here no action is contemplated, or will follow upon the existence of such acts. They are neither produced by preceding acts of will, nor do they produce acts of any kind; they spring up, as we have said, spontaneously in view of their several objects, and have no other antecedents than these objects themselves, and the powers and susceptibilities and habits of the mind. Let it not be forgotten then that when such expressions are used as “*you can if you will*, and *you could if you would*,” respect is always had, or should be had, to a *deliberate* act of the will—and to some action as its appropriate result—and not to an *immanent* act, which terminates on no such action, but simply on some object in which it rests. This opens the way for a 4th remark, namely, That deliberate acts of the will, as they never arise but in view of some action, so they never arise but in view of some action which we believe to be in our power, and which we expect as the immediate consequent of our volition. For why should we attempt to *act*, if we *knew*, or *believed* beforehand, it would be in vain. Such an attempt would be irrational, and without motive. Hence, deliberate acts of the will are always connected with belief—and with belief of the possibility of something to be done, and done by us; and they would not arise but for the prior existence of such belief. Now it is entirely different with the *immanent acts* of the will; they arise without believing the *practicability* of anything, because nothing *practicable* or *impracticable* is contemplated as the result of their exercise. They terminate on an object *pleasing* or *displeasing* to the mind, not

on an action, *bodily* or *mental*, as the expected consequent and fruit of their existence. There is belief, indeed, prior or coincident with their being—belief in the objects which excite them—belief in their own existence, when to the mind's apprehension or consciousness they do exist—and belief also in the subject mind, whose acts or exercises they are ; but there is *no belief* in any practicable result from their exercise in order to their exercise ; nor is there any belief in their own possibility, or practicability, as feelings or states of mind—none, I mean, as the antecedent ground or cause of their existence. They arise, as we have more than once remarked, *spontaneously*, in view of their appropriate objects ; and men know that they *can* love or hate, because they *do* love or hate—just as they know that they can reason and remember, because they do reason and remember. When a mother looks upon the smiling infant in her arms, and her bosom heaves with affection, does she first consider the practicability of her love, and believe her love attainable, before she exercises love ? Everybody knows to the contrary ; and so far as the mere *act of volition* is concerned, it may well be questioned whether the belief that I can *will* or can *will* has anything at all to do, as the antecedent ground or cause of willing in any case. For how does a man know that he has the capacity of willing in one form or another, but by the mere fact that he does will, and in such forms as this class of phenomena assumes. Still we do not take back the statement, that our deliberate acts of will always arise in connection with a belief of the *practicability* of the thing willed, or of the action chosen. For this enters into the motive for willing it, and without such belief no rational inducement would exist. But who does not see a difference between believing the action, or *thing willed*, to be practicable, and believing the *volition* which antecedes the action to be so ? It is one thing, surely, to believe that

I *can raise* my hand to my head, and another that I have a *capacity* for willing or choosing it, when adequate motives are presented. But be this as it may, the *immanent acts* of the will stand in no connection with the practicability of any results as flowing from them. They contemplate no results, they believe none—none certainly as the antecedent cause or ground of their existence.

What, then, shall we think of that philosophy or divinity which makes no distinction between *immanent* and *deliberate* acts of the will? and none between the *action* willed and the *act* of willing—and assumes that neither the one nor the other can exist without a previous or concomitant belief that it will or may exist? “You cannot love God, till you believe that you can; nor hate sin till you believe that you can.” ‘And hence the great importance of persuading men, not only that they have all the ability which is requisite to obligation, but all that is necessary to make sure of its performance; for until this persuasion exists, they in fact can do nothing, and will do nothing, because there is no adequate motive to action. For as men never will an action till they believe that action practicable; so they cannot *will to love*, or *hate*, till they believe these acts or exercises practicable’—taking it for granted that the cases are precisely parallel; whereas, to an eye not hoodwinked by ignorance or blinded by prejudice, the two cases compared will appear wide as the poles. In the one, an action is *contemplated* and *sought*, as the fruit of volition, and believed to be its legitimate consequent: in the other, there is no such action *recognized*, *sought*, or *believed* at all. In the one case, something is designed or intended: in the other, there is no design, purpose or intention, whatsoever; but the mind simply loves or hates, is pleased or displeased, with the object it beholds.

I close by saying not in the words, but in the spirit of

an ingenious author, who has written an Introduction to Edwards on the Will, that until we mark with care the different classes of feelings called *acts of the will*, we can never hope to understand the subject of human volition, nor bring to a successful issue the disputes which relate to it.



## LECTURE II.

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### ON THE WILL.

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IN the remarks already submitted in a former lecture, on the subject of the will, we attempted to show a broad line of distinction, between what are denominated *immanent*, and *deliberate* acts of the will; that though exercises of the same faculty, they are very differently circumstanced—and that things predicable of the one, are not necessarily predicable of the other. We mentioned four particulars in which they stand distinguished.

1st. The *deliberate*, or *imperate* acts of the will are always connected with our operative faculties, and terminate on some *action* which we believe to be in our power, while the *immanent* acts never thus terminate. They fix on no action; they flow out in none, except so far as they become motives, or incentives, to deliberate acts of the will.

2d. That *virtue* and *vice* are *primarily* and *properly* predicable of immanent acts of the will only—the *deliberate* acts not *constituting*, but merely *indicating*, the character of the moral agent.

3d. That in such phrases as these, “*A man can if he will, or could if he would, or may if he please,*” respect must always be had to a *deliberate* act of the will, because such phrases can have no application to an *immanent* act. An *immanent act* contemplates no action as its im-

mediate fruit, or effect, and is followed by none. Neither *action* therefore, nor the *power* of action, is immediately suspended upon it, as in the case of a deliberate act of the will, and

4th. That deliberate acts of the will never arise, but in view of some action of our own, and some action which we believe to be in our power, and which we anticipate as the consequent of our *volition*. But with the immanent acts of the will, it is otherwise. They arise *spontaneously*, in view of their appropriate objects, without considering whether anything in relation to them is practicable or impracticable. They contemplate no results, as the ground of their exercise, and properly aim at none. They terminate on no *action*, bodily or mental, as their expected consequent—and hence there is no belief in relation to the consequent; whether it will or will not follow.

If these distinctions are well founded, it will be seen, at once, that they are vitally important; and that no clear views of the subject of human volition can ever be attained, while these distinctions are either overlooked or disregarded.

To the second of these distinctions, I propose now to ask your renewed attention: and I do it for two reasons; first, because it is peculiarly important in itself, and secondly, because it draws after it consequences of the deepest moment to moral and religious truth.

The distinction is this: That virtue and vice are primarily and properly predicable of *immanent* acts of the will only, the *deliberate acts* merely *indicating*, not constituting the character of the moral agent.

That this was the opinion of Edwards, there cannot be the least doubt; for besides what he said touching this subject in his Treatise on the *Will*, I present you with a strong quotation from a subsequent work of his, on original sin (page 171): "This," says he, "is the gene-



ral notion (of mankind)—not that *principles* derive their goodness from *actions*, but that actions derive their goodness from the *principles* whence they proceed ; so that the *act* of choosing that which is good, is no farther virtuous, than it proceeds from a good principle, or virtuous disposition of mind.”

*By choosing*, in this passage he obviously means a deliberate act of choice, which terminates on something to be done or not done ; and by *principle*, or *virtuous disposition* of mind, he means something of which the mind is conscious, and which is seen to be virtuous—some *right affection* of the mind, something, which according to him, may be distinguished from *ambition*, or mere *self-love*—and therefore most certainly some exercise or emotion. In close connection with this passage, he quotes with approbation, from Mr. Hutchison, the following paragraph :

“ Every action which we apprehend, as either morally good, or morally evil, is always supposed to *flow from* some affections towards sensitive natures. And whatever we call virtue or vice, is either some such *affection*, or some action *consequent upon it*. All the actions counted religious in any country, are supposed, by those who count them so, to flow from some affections towards the Deity, and whatever we call *social* virtue, we still suppose to *flow from* affections towards our fellow-creatures.”

Here is a full recognition of the fact, that all virtue and vice have their seat in the affections, and that no act of the will, which is consequent upon them, has moral character any farther than as it is expressive of the state of the affections. So it must be, if “ *actions derive their goodness from their principles*, as Edwards teaches ; and if “ *the act of choosing that which is good, be no farther virtuous than as it proceeds from a virtuous disposition of mind.*” Because, if you separate the choice from the affection which gave birth to it, you instantly take away its virtuous character ; and if you attach to it

a vicious affection, as the spring, or source of its exercise, you render the choice *vicious*, and not *virtuous*. And the same may be said of the action or thing chosen. Its moral character, so far as it has any, is wholly derived from the state of moral feeling which induced the agent to act in the case.

The conclusion we draw from the foregoing statement is, that strictly speaking, all *right* and *wrong* attaching to moral agents, is *immediately* and *directly* predicable of their *affections*, *habits* or *dispositions*—that is, of the *immanent* acts of the will, and whatever is included in them; and not of the *emanant* or *deliberate* acts of that faculty. We consider this just as certain as the admitted maxim, that the motive of the action, or the *quo animo*, determines the character of the action. Hence two obvious *corollaries*.

1st. If *right* and *wrong* *can* and *do* exist anterior to the deliberate acts of the will, and independent of them, then *moral agency* must exist anterior also, and be alike independent of such deliberate acts. For it would be absurd to suppose that there is either right or wrong in a moral sense, where there is no obligation, no law—or that there should be obligation, where there is no moral agent, or subject of law. In the order of nature, at least, moral agency must precede law; and law must precede *conformity*, or *non-conformity*, to its demands.

2d. If moral agency exists anterior to the *deliberate* acts of the will, then it is not necessary to resort to *these*, nor to any of the principles or laws by which they are governed, to ascertain what *moral agency* is, and what is essential to its being. It has gained complete existence, before these acts of the will occur, and their occurrence does nothing more than *indicate* or *proclaim* the character of the agent. They afford probable evidence whether *his* agency has been exercised in conformity to law, or against it—and, so far as *blame* or praise worthiness is concerned, *this* is all they can do.

To what purpose then is it asked, whether in our *deliberate* and *determinate* volitions, we have power to choose otherwise than we do choose?—whether the strongest motive governs the will in this case, or does not govern it?—whether we believe the object thus chosen to be in our power, or not in our power? To what purpose are these, and similar questions asked, with a view to settle our accountability, when, if the foregoing statement is true, the whole business of our responsibility is *settled* before we come to these questions, settled by the voice of conscience, and the common sense of mankind, attesting the *indubitable fact*, that our *blame* and *praise* worthiness, primarily and radically consists in those moral affections which antecede all our deliberate choices, and give *character* to them, so far as character they have.

Most certain it is, that if these antecedent affections have a moral character, he is responsible for them whose affections they are—they are properly placed to his account, as his acts, his exercises, for which as an accountable being he must answer. To say that they have *moral* character, and yet the subject of them not responsible, would be manifestly absurd: for nothing can have moral character which is not referable to law; and what reference can there be to law, where there is no subject of law, and no acts of such subject to be referred? To admit that these affections are morally good, or morally evil, is, of course, to admit that the subject of them, so far as they are concerned, sustains the same character, and that upon the ground of his being a moral agent, who, in the exercise of these affections, has exercised his moral agency. At this very point it is, that the law of God reaches us, and our whole character is determined in his sight, not by what we deliberately will or propose, but by those affections, which we exercise anterior to all deliberate volitions or purposes whatsoever.

Do we not find our moral agency complete, then, before we come to our deliberate and determinate volitions? How else could we be responsible for those anterior and primary choices, which we call affections and desires? and how else could the entire moral character be measured in God's sight, and decided by these?

The ground which we take is, that the law of God reaches man in the earliest development of his moral feelings, and requires him, first of all, to love his Maker with all his heart, soul, strength and mind, and his neighbor as himself:—of course that it prohibits whatsoever is contrary to *this*; be it an immoderate regard to himself, or to any of the creatures, which God has made, when compared with Him, who is the infinite source of being, and the sum of all excellence. We admit, indeed, that a thousand other things are required of man, in filling up the sphere of his activity; yet all is to be done as the proper fruit and expression of that love which the law immediately and primarily enjoins. And God is no farther obeyed than this great law of love is actually complied with. Do what you will—purpose what you will—there is not a particle more of virtue in it, than there is of that holy, disinterested love, which the law immediately respects, and which ought to be the great incentive to every deliberate act and purpose of the soul.

This cannot well be denied, and perhaps will be cheerfully conceded: at the same time we may be told, that we overlook an important fact in the case, namely, That man, as a rational and moral being, has the power of *introverted action*, can turn his eye inward upon himself, and act upon himself. Not only is he able to consider his ways and his doings, but the causes and springs of those ways and those doings. He can bring before his mind facts and considerations, which are fitted to abate the strength of his wrong affections, and

to awaken and invigorate those which are virtuous. In short, that he can modify his motives in the requisite manner and degree, in consequence of the power, *direct* or indirect, which his will has over the objects which excite his affections or desires. Were it not for this power, he could not be bound to have his affections otherwise than they are; but with it, it is reasonable he should be required to place his affections on the right objects and in the right measure.

This is the ground taken by Chalmers and a host of others; and on this ground, they rest the moral responsibility of man. They contend that without this power, man would not be a moral agent, nor obliged to regulate his affections according to the Divine law. They do not assert that man can *directly* will his affections into existence, or will them out—that is, by the simple bidding of his will *can* place them on *this* object, or on *that*, controlling them as a man controls his limbs, by a direct act of choice. They were too well versed in the laws of mind, to adopt an opinion so utterly inconsistent with the state of facts. Nor do they pretend that he has the power to *will objects* into, or out of his mind, by a simple act of volition. They admit that the law of suggestion or association, has something to do in this business, and that often great difficulty is experienced in getting rid of one set of objects, and replacing them with others. Yet, on the whole, they think man has the power of doing this *directly* or *indirectly*; and if not at once, still by degrees, and in such measure, that he may reasonably be held responsible to do it. For if he has the power, he is bound to exercise it, and in so doing, to control his affections by bringing before his mind the right objects, and shutting out from it the wrong ones. By a process of this kind, it is contended that virtuous affections may not only be *awakened*, but carried to their proper height, and vicious affections be repressed and annihilated.

Agreeably to this system, man's moral agency does not begin, and much less end in the mere *fact* of his having *moral* affections, or immanent acts of will, but is primarily concerned, and properly involved in his *deliberate* acts. As a contemplative and rational being, his duty is placed before him, together with the means of performing it. These means he must consider, and determine to employ; and in this determination, or in its opposite, his moral agency begins and ends; and that prior to this, or back of this, there is neither agency nor accountability.

This is the *spot*, the very *spot*, where many of the mighty have fallen; and here it becomes us to pause and look about us, and if we have any armor, to put it on. For if this doctrine be true, then is the system of Edwards overthrown—then does conscience give a fallacious testimony—and the Bible itself become an enigma, which no philosophy can explain, nor the unlettered multitude understand. Only say that there is neither *right* nor *wrong* in what are called the moral affections, any farther than they are *cherished* by a deliberate act of the will, and we shall not only contradict the common sense of mankind, but take a step, which goes far towards shutting both virtue and vice out of the world. For, according to this system, what is virtue, and what is vice? Not the existence of *right* and *wrong* affections, but the *mere indulgence* or *prolongation* of these by a deliberate act of the will. Apart from this act, there is no vice, and no virtue. It is this, *this* act alone, which constitutes the essence of moral action, and the *nature* and *sum* of all *merit* or *demerit* in any case. Such is the doctrine. But here it is natural to inquire, whether this deliberate act of the will took place without motive? No one, I suppose, will pretend that it did, and if it were pretended, it would be absurd on two accounts. First, because no reason could then be as-

signed why the volition was thus, and not otherwise. And secondly, because it could have no moral character of any kind. Influenced by nothing, it would be a mere determination to act without an end. But suppose the *volition* occurred through the influence of motive—where can you find that motive, but in some previous state or feeling of the mind, which inclined it to *cherish* the affection in the case? Are we not, then, carried back to something antecedent to the volition to cherish? and to something, too, which gives character to the volition, if character, it can have? Why did I will to cherish the supposed affection, be it virtuous or vicious? There must be some *cause, ground or reason* (if you would not have an effect without a cause). The cause was doubtless no other than the *motive* which determined me. But what was the motive? Say, in the case of the virtuous affection? Was it a *love* for the virtuous affection itself? Did I contemplate it with delight, and hence desire its continuance? Then that affection was lovely, it seems, in my estimation at least, before I loved it; and did not become so in consequence of my love, or of my determination to cherish it. Was it a dutiful regard to God, or his law, which determined me? Then, according to the unequivocal voice of conscience, the motive was *virtuous*. It involved a feeling or state of mind which every one must recognize as right in itself, and distinctly required in the Divine law. But if *virtuous* at all, it was so without being produced by any antecedent volition, whether directly or indirectly; because no such volition is supposed, or can be supposed, in the case.

I make another supposition. I was determined, by neither of the preceding motives, to cherish what I regarded as a virtuous affection, but was influenced wholly by self-love. My own interest, not a regard to God's honor, or the good of others, was my inducement to act. Was this *self-love* a virtuous feeling? It is the spring of

many a specific volition; and, in the unrenewed man, is doubtless a commanding principle of action. But I ask, is it *virtuous*? or can it be supposed that an act of the will, moved and determined by it, will meet the approbation of Heaven, when it must be conceded that those higher motives which the law requires are altogether wanting? There is, in truth, no cause for doubt here. Yet some one may say it is absurd to suppose that a man should resolve to cherish a virtuous affection, from mere self-love, because the very existence of such affection involves a virtuous state of mind, incompatible with reigning selfishness at the moment. We admit the case to be so. But who does not perceive that this is going upon the supposition that the affection to be cherished is, in itself, *virtuous*, and *virtuous*, antecedent to any purpose to cherish or prolong it? But taking the ground of my opponent, that what is called virtuous affection is not virtuous *per se*, but becomes so, if so at all, by a resolution to cherish it; or rather, what is more properly intended, that this resolution itself is all the virtue there is in the case. On this ground, I say, I see not why the purpose, or will to cherish the supposed affection, may not as well arise from selfishness as from any other source, because the character of the volition is not admitted to depend on the motive or principle from which it proceeds. Where then is virtue? and where is vice? They are both shut from the world, unless we can be made to believe that a deliberate act of the will has moral character, aside from, and independent of, the motive which governs it. But can we be made to believe this, so long as the *quo animo* shall be regarded as a *sine qua non* in the decision of moral character? A deliberate act of the will, without motive, nobody supposes to be possible, or if possible could possess any moral quality. And such an act, *with motive*, must derive its character from the *motive* which determined it, unless our consciousness



deceive us, and the settled notions of mankind on this subject be unfounded. But allow this, and you give moral character to motive—and to him whose motive it is—and that antecedently to the volition it occasioned or determined. Thus you carry back moral agency to those primary feelings, or immanent acts of the will, which are prior to all deliberative acts. Perhaps, however, it will be said that we have not reconnoitered the whole ground; that feeling or affection is not the only motive by which the will may be swayed in moral matters; that *judgment* and the *moral sense* often furnish inducement to action, when the heart is altogether indifferent or averse to the thing proposed; and that, for aught we know, a man may be led to yield to the claims of duty from the dictates of conscience alone. Suppose it were so. Can we make the inference that he has acted *virtuously*? *virtuously*, I mean, in the highest and best sense of the term? Will God approve him as having done his duty, in the absence of those motives which he can never fail to require. Let us put a case.

A man deliberates whether he shall pay a just debt, having found that no law of man can compel him so to do. He perceives his obligation to yield to the demand of justice; and conscience suggests the fitness of the thing, and the intrinsic baseness of refusing to another what he would certainly desire and claim for himself. It reminds him that God is looking on, and that the day of recompense will come. Thus prompted, he determines to pay the debt, and perhaps feels a degree of self-approbation in what he has done. But was it truly a virtuous determination? such as the all-seeing eye of God will approve? By the supposition, there was no love to his neighbor, no regard to the Divine honor, either felt or expressed on the occasion. How, then, could the act be virtuous in the sight of Him whose law is summed up in *love—love*

to himself and to the creatures he has made? But this is not all; we have gone upon the supposition that the heart was not enlisted, because no right feeling prompted to the action. But *was* it not enlisted? Was it not moved by supreme self-love? The man whose determination we are considering, had a deep interest at stake, and one which he could not fail to see and to feel. Nor does it seem possible that he should not have been influenced by it. But *conscience*, you will say, *moved* him. Very true; but what chiefly gave conscience its power? It created no new principles of action in the mind, but simply addressed those which were already there. It decided, indeed, what *ought* to be done; but in urging a compliance with duty, its chief power lay in stimulating the natural feelings or desires. In the selfish bosom it deals principally with *hope* and *fear*, and influences to right action, (in form, at least,) not so much because it is right—a motive which the unsanctified never truly feel—but because of the *good*, or the *ill*, which stands connected with heeding or disregarding the call of duty. This *good*, or this *ill*, is the *great*, if not the only impelling power in the mind of an unrenewed man. Where there *are* higher principles, as in the heart of the truly virtuous, conscience may excite them, and be the occasion of their more vigorous action; but where they *are not*, (though it requires them,) it would be unreasonable to suppose that it can either address them or produce them. What is *conscience*, when developed, but our moral judgment, with reference to a supposed action, pronouncing it *right* or *wrong*, and the emotion of self-approbation or remorse which usually attends it? In this operation of the mind there is neither virtue nor vice, nor can it be regarded as the immediate and proper source of any. We do not deny that conscience is one of the constituent principles of a moral agent, and, in this respect, necessary to acts of a moral character; but

in itself, we say, it has no such character. Though favorable to virtue, as it shows its obligations and urges their fulfillment, still it neither constitutes virtue nor necessarily leads to it, however clear in its convictions or powerful in its appeals. And the reason is, it can appeal only to such principles, feelings or desires, as actually exist. In looking, therefore, for the essence of moral virtue, we must go beyond the dictates and emotions of conscience; we must have a *motive* which the exercise of this faculty can never supply, and which can be found only in the immanent exercises of the will or the moral affections. This we take to be just as certain as that the heart is the seat of vice or virtue, and that the operations of conscience are distinguishable from the affections or the heart. [See note A. at the end.]

I have dwelt longer on this article, because some ascribe to conscience a power which evidently does not belong to it; a power not only of showing what duty is, and of urging a compliance with it, by an appeal to those principles and feelings which the mind possesses, but of generating new and correct feelings, and thus swaying it by motives which it never felt before. We know of no facts in the history of the mind which can sustain this opinion, while there are *some* at least, which appear strongly adverse to it. Look at the wretch who suffers the keenest remorse, while he exhibits not a particle of contrition but whose moral feelings, so far as they can be judged of, are as wide from what God requires, as when slumbering in a state of most fearless security. Many such cases have been seen in this world, and many more will be seen in the world which is to come, where conscience will display her tremendous power in convincing sinners, not only of their past misdeeds, but of their present obligations and their hourly-increasing guilt; while it urges them to desist from their desperate war-

fare against God, but urges them in vain. The selfish heart will remain selfish still, notwithstanding the constant and powerful appeals of conscience against sin, and in favor of the Divine law. I am aware it may be said, that in that world *hope never comes*, and that *this* puts a difference between a sinner *on earth* and a sinner *in hell*. True, a difference exists, and a great difference, in point of *present* and *prospective good*. But what has this to do with the question before us; the *nature* and power of conscience as a principle of action? Conscience is the *same principle there as here*; it makes its appeal to *reason* and to *self-interest* no less in *that* world than in *this*. If it does not address *hope*, it addresses *fear*, which is only another form of self-love; and, as a motive to action, just as valuable as *hope*, deriving its character and its power from the same generic affection—a regard to our own welfare. It addresses this principle, too, under many advantages, the alluring objects of the world being removed, and with them all doubts of the reality of another and eternal world. *God, his law, his government*, stand forth before the eye of the soul, in all their matchless grandeur, carrying a deep and everlasting conviction of the justness of their claims. It cannot be questioned for a moment, that it is the sinner's interest, even in hell, to cease his hostility against his Maker; nor is it possible that he should not *see* and know this to be the fact. Why, then, does he not heed the voice of conscience, and submit to rightful authority, instead of flying in the face of the Almighty, and tempting him to fiercer vengeance? It is surely not for want of clearly understanding the subject, nor because self-love or self-interest is not distinctly and powerfully addressed, but because neither understanding nor self-love, however appealed to, will induce to right action, where the mind has lost its rectitude, and is under the reigning power of sin. Why should they? Considered as *principles* or *motives*, how

can they impart to an action a character which they in no wise possess? "Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or the tree corrupt and the fruit corrupt. A good man out of the good treasure of his *heart* bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his *heart* bringeth forth evil things." As is the *heart* or the affections, such will be the *volition*, the *deliberate volition*, which proceeds from it; the *motive* and the *volition* always possessing the same character, so far as character is attributable to the latter; and this not in one world, but in all worlds. Were it possible that I could be induced to act, by a mere thought or intellection, without its ever touching my heart, the action would possess no moral character of any kind; or if I were moved by *self-love* to any deliberative act of will, that act could be *regarded* as no better than the motive which inspired it; and if I contravened no law by this act, it would be no worse.

We come then to the same conclusion as before, that there can be neither virtue nor vice in the world, if it be not found in the moral affections or immanent acts of the will.

The mere exercise of conscience, we have seen, has no moral character, and can of itself directly impart none. This, we think, must be evident to all who attend to the constitution of the mind, and consider the relation which the several powers bear to each other. Unless we give up the principle which is natural to every man's creed, that the nature of the motive decides the nature of the action, we shall be compelled to believe that there is neither vice nor virtue, but in those primary feelings which we denominate affections or immanent acts of the will, or at most in those habits and tendencies which these involve.

We might here close the argument, but there are two or three other points which demand a more distinct

consideration. These we shall reserve for the next lecture.

[NOTE A.] A mistake has often arisen on this subject, from not distinctly apprehending what is involved in acting *conscientiously*. To act conscientiously, in the highest and best sense of the expression, is not only to do the thing which conscience dictates, but to do it in the manner and form, and with the motives which conscience requires. Thus to do is always to act virtuously, if conscience be properly informed. But in a lower sense, a man is sometimes said to act *conscientiously*, when he merely does the thing which conscience demands, though not with the high and holy motives which it requires; as when he keeps the Sabbath, or pays his debts, merely or chiefly because he is afraid of disturbing his own peace, or incurring the Divine displeasure. In this case, we should all admit that there was no true virtue in his conduct, though he has, to a certain extent, acted according to the biddings of his conscience. That conscience prevails with a man, (therefore,) is no proof that he has done right, and that God accepts him, unless you know on what grounds, or for what reasons, it has prevailed; and that these were such as the Divine law makes essential to right action. Overlooking this important circumstance has been a fruitful source of mistake, in arguing from conscience as a principle of action. Because to act conscientiously is, in some cases, to act *virtuously*, some have incautiously inferred that conscience was itself a principle of virtue, and that wherever it prevailed, the motive, of course, must be right, and the action consequently virtuous. But if we carefully consider what is implied in *acting conscientiously*, and the different senses in which the phrase is often employed, we shall clearly perceive that no such inference can be drawn. Conscience, when truly enlightened, is a *rule* of action, and to act in conformity to it, is doubtless to act virtuously; but then we act from *motives* which conscience recommends, but which conscience, as a power or principle of the mind, can never supply.



## LECTURE III.

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### ON THE WILL.

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THE doctrine of our opponents is, that we are made responsible for our affections, when of a moral character, because we have the power, directly or indirectly, to modify them. We can bring before the mind those objects which will awaken and invigorate the right affections, and exclude those which would excite and maintain the wrong ones. This power, say they, is lodged in the will: the will controls the objects, and the objects the affections. And hence we are bound to have such affections, and of such strength, as the law of God requires, and to repress and exclude those which the law of God forbids. In this voluntary effort thus to regulate our affections, and not in any previous state of mind, consists the essence of virtue; and in the neglect of this, and in efforts opposed to it, lies the essence of vice. Herein man's moral agency begins, if it does not end.

But we have shown already that this voluntary effort, by which is intended a deliberative act of the will, cannot arise without a correspondent motive; and that this motive cannot be found but in the affections or immanent acts of the will, which lie back of the deliberative acts, and which give them all the character they possess.

We now ask, Why should these affections be *cherished* when *right*, and *discouraged* when *wrong*, if not right

and wrong in themselves—at least at the time, and in the circumstances, in which they are cherished? It would seem as if they were so regarded by the mind, when it sets itself to the labor of cherishing or repressing them. Nor can we well doubt that this is the unbiased voice of the moral faculty within us. But it may be replied, that anger is not wrong *per se*, yet may become so if it rises to excess: natural affection is not right or wrong *per se*, but may become wrong, both by excess and defect. Consequently, though these affections are neither right nor wrong in themselves, yet the law requires us to regulate them, and it is a part of virtue to do this. Suppose it were so—what follows? Not that we have no moral affections, nor that these affections are not the source or spring of every moral act. Say, for example, I determine to restrain the passion of anger, which I apprehend is rising to excess, and that I endeavor to call to mind those facts and considerations which I judge suitable to abate the fervor of my spirit. Has this voluntary effort any moral character? If it has, it must arise from the motive or feeling which dictated and governed it. [Suppose I repress anger from cowardice, and not from a sense of its sinfulness.] So that in this case also we are carried back to the heart, or the moral affections, as the spring-head of our deliberate action, and the proper source of all the moral character it possesses. But have we in fact any *moral* affections? affections which are moral in their own nature, independent of the fact of their being regulated or not? affections which are right or wrong in themselves, whether they exist in one degree (of strength) or another? What is love to God, and love to man? What is love to being in general—a love which is disinterested, impartial and universal? What is love of complacency in virtuous and holy beings? Does not conscience perceive in these affections something morally excellent, let their amount



or degree be what they may? And does it not perceive in their contraries something intrinsically base and immoral? What is *envy*, *malignity*, *hatred*, *revenge*? A man praises my rival, and I feel a painful emotion, not because I believe the praise to be unjust, but because I fear it is too sure an indication of my competitor's success. Is this feeling wrong *per se*? No matter how it originates, nor whether it is a simple or compound feeling; is it morally wrong in every degree of it? or does its immoral character depend on its strength or modification? Common sense will be at no loss here. Again: The character of God is exhibited, and I am displeased with it: to me it is unlovely, not to say hateful. Is this feeling wrong, and in every measure of it, let its source be what it may? Every unsophisticated mind, we should think, would answer in the affirmative. But it may and must be replied by my opponents: It is wrong because I cherish it, and do nothing to remove it. But what if I do cherish it? How does this make it wrong, if not wrong before? Why should I not cherish it? Does it break any law? and does conscience pronounce it wrong on this account? Then wrong it is, antecedent to my cherishing or opposing it, because, in the very fact of its being wrong, the reason is found why I should not cherish but oppose it. Do you say it is wrong, because it is a state of mind not in conformity with my relations to God and his government? You say truly; but then you give it a character founded upon a reason which is prior to my judgment concerning it, and necessarily prior to any measures I may take to foster or oppose it. The truth is, it is simply seen to be wrong, as contradicting what my moral judgment pronounces to be fit and proper in the case. Nor does it make any difference whether this judgment is founded upon what is supposed to be the tendency of the wrong feeling, as it respects God or his creatures, or whether it is founded upon the intrinsic

baseness of the feeling itself, as standing opposed to what I am constrained to regard as *moral rectitude*. I may be a utilitarian in my notions of virtue, or I may hold to a radical and essential distinction between virtue and vice considered in themselves, and apart from their tendencies; yet I cannot escape from the strong and indubitable conviction, that certain moral feelings are so *per se*, and not because, by a direct or indirect act of my will, I can modify or change them. They are no sooner a matter of my consciousness than I approve or condemn them, as conformable or not conformable to the rule of duty: of course I approve or condemn myself, as having fulfilled or violated my obligations. This is the natural and inevitable result of my constitution. I go upon the principle that I am a moral agent, or a being under law. I neither do nor can question this fact. It is made certain to me by my own consciousness; and I could as soon doubt of my being as of my moral responsibility. This is a truth which I constantly assume, as often as I judge of my feelings or character. I recognize it in every moral distinction which I make. For to perceive that this *ought to be*, and that that *ought not to be*, is the very same thing as to perceive a law of duty, and, so far as I am concerned, a law which binds me. *Ought*, and *ought not*, carry in them the very notion of obligation, so that where one is perceived the other is perceived also. They are coextensive with and necessarily involve each other. They are, in fact, but one and the same thing, differently expressed. Consequently, I no sooner perceive the Divine character, than I perceive my obligation to love and venerate it. Love and veneration are affections of mind, which I instantly perceive to be duty, in opposition to lukewarmness and indifference, and especially to hatred and contempt; or, which comes to the same thing, I perceive the moral difference between these two states of mind—that the one ought to be, and that the other

ought not to be. But why? Why *ought* the one to be, rather than the other? The utilitarian would answer, Because it tends to happiness, my own or another's; and the anti-utilitarian, Because it is in itself morally fit and proper—right in its own nature, apart from, and independent of, its consequences. But my opponent can assign no reason why it ought to be, without denying his own consciousness, and contradicting his own principles. Suppose he should say, I *ought* to love the Divine character, because I see it to be right; and I see it to be right, because I have the power of bringing that character before me in its most interesting attitudes. Does he not, in the very assertion that he sees this to be right, presuppose such a knowledge of the Divine character as binds him to love? How else could he see this to be right? How does he know but that, upon a more careful consideration of what God is, he might find just cause to hate and oppose him? The very fact that he sees it to be right to love, supposes that he knows enough of the character of God already to lay him under indispensable obligations to love; and, of course, that his obligations to this duty are not suspended upon any supposed capabilities of turning his attention to the Divine character, if he shall choose so to do. He sees it to be right now, and cannot help but see it as often as the subject presents itself to his mind. But his seeing it to be right now, is nothing different from his perceiving it to be a matter of present obligation; and this obligation is plainly felt, if felt at all, antecedent to the consideration of the supposed power of bringing the character of God before the mind by a deliberate act of the will. Every one intuitively perceives (every one, I mean, to whom the character of God has been made known) that he is under strong and immediate obligation to love his Maker, without taking into view his power of calling up the character of God, and making it the subject of his steady

contemplation. This character is no sooner seen, by whatever means, than the obligation to love and adore it is felt. Besides, what is the power here spoken of—the power to bring the Divine character, as an object of love, before the mind? It has not been shown, nor can it be shown, that this power would reach and awaken the susceptibility necessary to the actual exercise of love. But waving this point for the present, let us suppose that love, true love to God, exists. Was it called into existence by a previous act of volition? This is not pretended, at least by a *direct* act: nor need it be supposed to be done by an indirect act; for the character of God may be exhibited to me without any act of my will at all—I mean, of course, a determinate act. A man may pronounce in my ears, whether I will or not, what God is, and what his claims upon me are. Now, let us suppose that my affections, in these circumstances, are drawn forth in holy love to the Divine Being. Are these affections virtuous? Conscience says they are, though no deliberate act of my will was employed in bringing them into being, or in prolonging their existence—so long, at least, as the exhibition of the Divine character was made by the agency of another, and independent of my own voluntary effort. Conscience, we have said, approves these affections thus awakened towards the infinitely blessed God. But upon what ground does it approve? Not because the Divine character was brought into view by a deliberate act of my will, making my affections to depend upon this act, and their virtue radically to consist in it, as my opponents contend; but simply and solely because, in the exercise of these affections, I did my duty. Give us but this plain position, and the question at issue is decided: you confess to me that I have acted as a moral agent, and have done my duty, in merely exercising my moral affections, independently of any deliberate act of my will. Moral agency, then,

certainly may and does exist anterior to deliberate volition. Nor does it appear that we have overlooked an important fact in the case, as alleged by our opponents, in coming to this conclusion.

Take another view of this subject. Say that there is no virtue in my affections of love to God, unless I resolve to cherish them, and so far only as I do thus resolve. I ask them, as before, why should I cherish them, if they contain nothing in themselves virtuous or praiseworthy? I ask again, if they contain nothing in themselves praiseworthy antecedently to my cherishing them, how do they become so afterwards? Does my purpose or resolution concerning them alter their nature or character in any degree? Does it render them more pure, more disinterested, or more lovely in any respect? Does it alter their source, their tendency, or results? They are pleasing emotions in view of the Divine character, at first: what are they different, or can they be made to be, afterwards, by any act or purpose of mine? It is plain they undergo no change, as to their essential qualities, by any efforts which I make in relation to them. True, it may be said, but I myself undergo a change; I become virtuous, by my voluntary effort to cherish or prolong these affections. It is this approving and deliberate act of my will which constitutes all the virtue there is in the case. But here, let it not be forgotten, that if I resolve to cherish these affections, I must have some motive for so doing, and what shall that motive be? Suppose it were selfish? that I determine to cherish these affections simply as a means of promoting my own happiness, without the least regard to the honor of God, or the welfare of his kingdom, will this render my purpose or determination good and acceptable in the sight of God, who requires me to act for his glory in all things? Nobody will pretend this. But say I resolve to cherish the supposed affections, because I regard them as right

and fit in themselves, and because of their manifest tendency to reflect honor upon God, and to advance the happiness of his kingdom—objects ever dear to my heart? Then it is plain, there is a feeling back of the purpose, which moves the purpose, and gives it all the character it has, unless you will say that the principle of action, or the *quo animo* of a deliberate volition, has nothing to do with its character.

Thus, in whatever light this subject be viewed, we seem necessarily, and at once, to be thrown back to this common-sense notion, that every man's character, as a moral being, is to be judged of by the state of his heart. If his feelings or affections be right, his intentions or purposes will be right, his words and actions right. But if his affections are wrong, all will be wrong, and wrong to the same extent that his affections are. This, if we mistake not, is the unbiased voice of mankind at large, who never trouble themselves with the speculations of philosophers, but are governed in all their moral judgments by those radical principles of their constitution which settle the great question of right and wrong anterior to all reasoning or speculation on the subject. They no sooner discover what a man's feelings are, what he loves, and what he hates, than their decision is formed as to his character; they pronounce him *good* or *bad*, just as they perceive his moral feelings to accord with, or to be repugnant to, the rule of duty. To this view of the subject, President Edwards bears the most ample testimony—Part IV., Section 4th.

“The idea which the common people, through all ages and nations, have of faultiness, I suppose to be plainly this: a person's being or doing wrong with his own *will* and *pleasure*; containing these two things:

“(1.) His doing wrong, when he does as he pleases.

“(2.) His pleasures being wrong; or, in other words, perhaps more intelligibly expressing their notion, a per-

son's having his heart wrong, and doing wrong from his heart. And this is the sum total of the matter.

"The common people do not ascend up, in their reflections and abstractions, to the metaphysical sources, relations and dependencies of things, in order to form their notion of faultiness or blameworthiness. They do not wait till they have decided, by their refinings, what first determines the will; whether it be determined by something extrinsic or intrinsic; whether volition determines volition, or whether the understanding determines the will; whether there be any such thing as metaphysicians mean by contingency (if they have any meaning); whether there be a sort of a strange, unaccountable sovereignty in the will, in the exercise of which, by its own sovereign acts, it brings to pass all its own sovereign acts. They do not take any part of their notion of fault or blame from the resolution of such questions." Were this the case, the author remarks, "that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand would live and die, without having any such notion as that of fault entering into their heads;" and the same remarks, substantially, he makes with respect to that which is virtuous or praiseworthy. The whole matter, according to him, as it is viewed by the great mass of mankind, is that a man's moral character is to be estimated by the state of his heart. If his heart be inclined to virtuous deeds, they regard him as *virtuous*, and the *more* virtuous, the more strongly and steadily his heart is thus inclined. And so in regard to that which is morally evil; the more a man's heart is inclined to it, and bent upon it, the more criminal he is; which goes upon the principle that his moral feelings give character to his deliberative acts and all the character they have. [See Note A, at the end.]

There is a single point more to which I wish to draw your attention. By those who dissent from the principles of this lecture, it is contended that man would love the

right objects, and in the right measure, did he but distinctly and carefully consider them; or that such is the constitution of the mind, that the appropriate affection would arise, were the object but clearly seen by the intellectual eye; or, as some choose to express themselves, that such are the powers and susceptibilities of every moral agent, that he needs only to have the truth clearly presented, to feel towards it, and its various objects, those affections which the law of God demands.

Allow me kindly to ask if this is not a great mistake? With respect to holy minds, such a statement may be admitted as in a high degree probable. It would not be strange, if every object should strike them in its true light, as they can have no prejudice against it; nor if the object when seen, should awaken the correspondent and appropriate feeling. But where is the proof, or even the probability that such would be the case with respect to unholy minds? Is it not manifest, indeed, that the fact is otherwise? How else could it be affirmed of the wicked, that "they hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved?" Why did the world hate the Saviour, and why did he predict that they would hate his followers? "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, *therefore* the world hateth you." Will it be said that the world hated Christ and his disciples, because they misapprehended their character, or did not intellectually view them aright? Then it was a false and imaginary character which they hated—something which did not belong to Christ and his disciples; and was it criminal to hate such a character? Besides, our Lord lays the ground of opposition in a totally different fact. "If ye were *of* the world, the world would love his own," that is to say, if ye were like the world, the world would love you;" but because ye are not of the world," or like the



world, "therefore the world hateth you." As if he had said, you possess a character different from, and opposite to theirs, and hence you may expect their hostility. But why? let me ask, unless this different and opposite character was distinctly discerned? We cannot hate what we do not see. But Christ knew they would both see and hate, and that this hatred would spring from an opposition of moral character. The same thing he asserts, when he speaks of the opposition of the Jewish nation to himself. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works, which none other man did, they had not had sin, but *now they have both seen and hated, both me and my Father*. But this cometh to pass, that the *word* might be fulfilled that is written in their law, *they hated me without a cause*." Did they not then see Jesus Christ, in his true character, as developed by what he did and what he taught? If not, their hatred of him was no proof of their hatred of his Father; for in his true character only, was there any likeness to his Father, and in this character only, did he represent his Father; and besides, how could he say, "*they have both seen and hated both me and my Father*," if it was not *him* which they hated, but a false and mistaken apprehension of him? speculatively and intellectually false, I mean; for his transcendent moral excellence they did not see; nor did any see it, whose eyes were not savingly enlightened from above. But this is wholly a different matter. To see the moral excellence of Christ, is to see his beauty; and to see his beauty is nothing different from exercising love to him. Beauty is an emotion, as is admitted upon all hands; and what we call the perception of it, is not the mere exercise of the intellectual faculty, but is the joint operation of the intellect and the heart. It cannot be otherwise, if the

perception of beauty involve emotion. And surely there can be no difficulty in supposing that what is pleasing to one, is deformed and hateful to another; not because their intellectual views are different, but because their tastes, their dispositions, their hearts are different. This is seen with respect to a thousand objects in the ordinary occurrences of life; and it is seen no less in the things of religion. The same truths which awaken the most delightful emotions in one mind, call forth the strongest feelings of disgust in another. The mere intellectual perception may be the same in both cases. To a great extent, it certainly cannot be otherwise; but the feelings which it occasions are as wide from each other as the poles. With this plain fact before us, how can it be doubted, that the opposition of the Jews to the Saviour was the result, not so much of any misunderstanding of his doctrines or his spirit, as of a selfish and wicked heart. They are of the world—he was not of the world. They were under the reigning power of sin—he infinitely *holy*. This contrariety of character laid a foundation for a contrariety of feeling; and nothing can be plainer, than that he constantly imputes their hostility to this obvious and decisive circumstance. His doctrines and his spirit offended them; those very doctrines and that very spirit which endeared him to his followers. Hence, said he, “This is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light.” But what is the light? what but the truth of God, brought to the world by the preaching of his Son? It is this which wicked men *hate*, (according to the Saviour’s testimony,) not because they do not see it, for they do see it, or it could not be an object of their hatred; but because it stands opposed to worldliness, and requires a subjugation of their wicked lusts, on the pains of eternal death. This is the ground,

and the true ground, of their opposition to the truths of the Gospel; their hearts are alienated from the life of God; they love neither his character, nor his law, nor his government; nor are they any better pleased with the character of his Son, or with the glorious system of truth and duty which he revealed.

But, contrary to all analogy, it has been conjectured that the true reason of men's opposition to the truth is, *their views are partial and distorted*, or they are transient and unsteady. Would they but take a more comprehensive view of things, and especially, would they dwell upon them with attention, they would soon find in the truth a subduing power, in breaking down the opposition of their hearts and transforming them into love.

I call this conjecture, because I know of no facts in the wide range of experience which can justify it; and fully am I persuaded that there is nothing to authorize it in the Bible.

What is the voice of experience? Every one knows that we have certain dispositions, passions or affections, which are excited or drawn forth by a perception of their corresponding objects. When these objects are contemplated, we expect, as a matter of course, that the feelings to which they are adapted will arise; and that these feelings will be strong and permanent, in proportion to the clearness and steadiness with which their several objects are viewed. The more distinctly and exclusively any object is seen, the more intense, other things being equal, will the excited feelings be. This is a matter of universal experience. Take a covetous man, counting over his wealth, or looking out with eagle eye for a chance to increase his fortune. Whoever supposed that a partial view of his darling object would awaken and stimulate his ruling passion, but that an entire and absorbing view would counteract and destroy

it? Or an ambitious man, whose aspiring soul kindles into ardor with every glance at the object of his pursuit; who expects that his characteristic feeling will subside, not to say expire, when the distinction which he pants for comes fully into view, and the prospect of success is augmented? In all such cases, we never doubt that the characteristic feeling or disposition will be called into exercise whenever its object shall be seen, and to the same degree in which it is seen; and we should no more think of eradicating the disposition by giving a glowing description of its object, than of pouring oil on the fire to extinguish the flames. Can any reason, then, be given why the same thing should not hold true with respect to all our *moral* feelings, whether vicious or virtuous, especially where they are known to have a settled and prevalent character? All admit, indeed, that the fact is so, with respect to our virtuous affections. Whatever object directly awakens them, it is believed, awakens them the more the more distinctly it is seen, and the more attentively it is considered. Why should it be otherwise with our sinful affections which are equally characteristic and permanent principles of action.

There is no ground for this supposition, either in our experience or in the reason and nature of things. It is as true of them as of every other feeling of the mind, that they are called into exercise by the objects which excite them, and that they acquire a force and intensity, usually in the same proportion that the exciting objects are spread out before the mind. There is no exception to *this*, where the excited feeling is produced by speculatively seeing the object as it is. Where it has been occasioned in whole or in part by a speculative error, a corrected view of the object may either soften the feeling or entirely remove it. In all other circumstances, it will increase with every increased view of its objective

cause. This we take to be certain, if our experience can be relied upon, and all analogies in the case do not utterly fail.

But some may suppose that our analogies *do* fail, and do not represent the case as it is. For though the covetous man is allured by the objects of his covetousness, and the ambitious man by the objects of his ambition, and even the virtuous man by the objects of his love; still, in all these cases an object is supposed, which is simply adapted to awaken the correspondent feeling, without anything to counteract it. But not so with respect to the truths of religion, which occasionally and in some aspects awaken the hostility of the sinner. *Here* many things are addressed to his conscience, his reason and his self-love, which he naturally approves, and which are calculated to abate his enmity and draw forth his friendship; and even when his hatred is felt, it is not so much towards the truth itself, or because it is truth *abstractly considered*, as because it crosses his path and threatens him with ruin. What if it be so? It affords no escape from the fact that there is something in the truths of religion, which awakens the hostility of the sinner and renders him the decided enemy of God. It matters not how much there is of a different character, so long as there is *that* which is repugnant to the sinner's heart, and which he never can behold without the feeling of predominant dislike. This surely cannot be denied without denying the voice of inspiration, which declares "that the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." If this does not assure us that there is a natural and stated contrariety between the sinner's heart and the holy character of God, it is difficult to say what could do it. How, then, can this character be seen by the sinner without exciting his aversion? The just man, we are told, is an abomination to the unjust; and can it be thought strange that a God of infinite

holiness, with power and disposition to punish the workers of iniquity, should be an object of hatred to the wicked? We have seen already that the world hated Christ and his disciples—not because they were deceived as to their doctrine or spirit, but because they were unlike them in the temper of their hearts. And for the same reason is the carnal mind at enmity with God and his law. God is holy, and his law holy; but the carnal mind is sold under sin, and therefore opposed to God and his law. If it be not so, why was it, “That *when* men *knew* God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened?” Why, in every age, have they been disposed “to say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?” Can this be accounted for on any other supposition than that they have always found *that*, in the true character of God, which was exceedingly unwelcome to their hearts, and which called forth their decided opposition? Is it, then, an unwarrantable inference, that the more they see of the Divine character, while under the dominion of sin, the more their hearts will be inflamed against it? This inimical feeling is with them a permanent characteristic, directed against the Divine character as a whole; and it seems impossible that it should not be excited in the same proportion as the exciting object comes clearly into view. \Thousands of individuals in every age, can bear witness that such has been their experience, when under conviction by the law, and antecedent to the renovation of their hearts. Was it not so with Edwards and Brainerd, and most of those the history of whose conversion we know? But why resort to the testimony of men, since the testimony of God is greater? Paul, surely, did not find his heart less opposed to the Divine law, the more clearly he saw the nature and extent of its demands. “I was alive,” saith he, “with-

out the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." That is, as I understand him, while he was comparatively ignorant of the law, he felt self-satisfied—full of his own imaginary goodness, and full of the expectation of life from his own righteousness. But when the commandment came with a new and Divine power, and he saw its spirituality and extent reaching to the thoughts and intents of the heart, "sin revived, and he died." "The commandment, which was ordained to life, he found to be unto death," both as it discovered to him the enormity of his guilt, which exposed him to death, and as it stirred up his wicked heart to rebel, and to rebel the more, the more it poured its sacred light into his bosom. "For sin," says he, "taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," it "deceived me, and thereby slew me." Before the commandment came, sin was *dead*—comparatively *dead*; but the commandment, on coming, gave it power. Its latent principles awoke and started into fresh and unwonted vigor. Not that the law was in fault; for "the law is holy, and the commandment *holy, just and good*; but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good—that sin by the commandment might *become* (not simply appear) exceeding sinful." It is plain that the Apostle is here speaking, not merely nor chiefly of the knowledge of sin, which was made manifest by the coming of the commandment, but of the power of sin as a principle of action—a principle which was called into vigorous exercise by a clearer perception of the spirituality and extent of the Divine law. And hence he accounts for this effect by stating "that the *law* is *spiritual*, but *he*, carnal, sold under sin." Let philosophy, then, contend for what she may, those who bow to the authority of the Bible can be at no loss, we should imagine, as to what they are to believe on the point under discussion. This

single statement of the Apostle's experience is, in our judgment, no equivocal proof that *mere light let into the understanding*, while the heart is unsanctified, is so far from awakening right affections, that it does but *irritate* the carnal mind, and provoke it to more decided enmity.

We cannot yield, therefore, to the opinion of our opponents, that were sinners to turn their attention to the right objects, and seriously meditate upon them, the appropriate and required affections would arise, as a matter of course, and agreeably to a law of their constitution. Such a sentiment appears to us to be alike at war with experience, and with the revealed truth of God. But grant, for a moment, that it *were* so; what does it avail towards showing that *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*, lie *not* in the moral affections, but in the deliberate acts of the will? Say that sinners will not turn their attention to God, and Divine things—and therefore are not rightly affected towards them—where lies their guilt? Not in the deliberate act of refusing to attend—apart from the feelings which led to the refusal—but in the state of their moral affections—in the obliquity of their hearts. They do not love God, and therefore do not desire the knowledge of his ways. They give a preference to other objects. This is the core of the difficulty, and the essence of their guilt—as every man's conscience instinctively testifies. So it must be, if the motive crown the action, and if actions derive their qualities from principles.

We come back, therefore, to the same conclusion as before, that strictly speaking both virtue and vice are found in the heart—that is, in those dispositions, choices and feelings which lie at the bottom of every deliberate act of the will. We call the deliberate act virtuous or vicious, as the case may be—and so we do the external action which proceeds from it—but we al-



ways have reference to the *motive* or *principle* which gave birth to the act, and which occasioned it to be as it is, and not otherwise. Show us the motive or feeling which has influenced or governed the mind, in any particular case, and we can show you the character of the act, or, to speak more correctly, the character of the actor, for in this very motive or feeling his blame or praise worthiness lies. Nor need this view of the subject create any difficulty on the score of moral agency and accountability. Our affections are as much our exercises, and the exercises of our will, as our deliberate choices or volitions, and altogether as much the immediate and proper subject of command. Nay, a regard to them is had in every command which God gives, while his law is summed up in two great precepts, immediately addressed to our hearts. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Such is the frame and constitution of our minds, that we immediately recognize the fitness of this command the moment we perceive its import. We stop not to inquire whether there be any process, and if so, what it is, which is necessary to bring into exercise the required affections. We perceive at once that we ought to have them, and to have them without delay ; and conscience condemns us for the slightest failure. The operations of our minds upon this subject are exceedingly simple ; we no sooner know what the demand of the law is, than we feel ourselves instantly bound to obey, and guilty if we do not obey. "He that knoweth *to do good*, and doth it not, to him it is sin," says the Apostle. But to *love God*, and *our neighbor* is, doubtless, one of the forms of *doing good*, that is, of *doing right*, as the expression may be understood. And no other facts or circumstances need to be known, than that thus to love is our duty, to bring us under immediate obligation to obey. So we reason and judge on every other subject of obligation.

Were we to see a man who felt no interest in the welfare of his country, but was willing to sacrifice its happiness to the objects of his private ambition, we should instantly condemn him for this state of mind. Could he see nothing to attract him in the virtuous deeds and sacrifices of a Washington, we should cry out upon him as a *wretch*. Because we feel that he ought to love and venerate the father of his country, and with a warmth and sincerity correspondent to his dignity and worth. *Not to do this* would, in our estimation, be infamy. In all such cases we connect the obligation with the simple fact of knowing *what* is justly expected and required.

But some may be ready to ask, how can I be responsible for my *affections*, unless I can control them, directly or indirectly, by some previous act of my will? and I ask in return, how can I be responsible for such previous act of my will, unless I can control *that*, by some other previous act? Will it be said that I chose to have that act of my will as it was, and not otherwise, and therefore I am responsible for it? Then I *chose* to *choose* it seems—and this renders my choosing blame, or praise worthy. But nobody, at this day, will resort to such an absurdity. The truth is, that in every exercise of the will, the agent acts freely; and *his* act is to be judged of by its own nature. If it be a deliberate act, we decide upon its character, so far as it has any, by the principle or motive which governed it. If it be an immanent act, it is, nevertheless, a free act, arising spontaneously in view of its object; and if it be of a moral character, this character is to be determined by comparing it with the law of duty. If it be such as the law requires, it is good and praiseworthy; and if it be otherwise, it is evil. It is simply the *nature* of the exercise, which we look at; and *this* we judge of, by the exercise being conformed, or not conformed, to the law; nor does it make any difference, whether the law be that which is written upon the

heart, by the light of nature, or whether it be revealed. The moment we perceive a law, which we recognize as a law of duty, we perceive ourselves to be bound by it (for these perceptions properly involve each other): of course we cannot fail to approve or condemn ourselves, as we yield, or do not yield, to the demands of the law. This is the natural result of our constitution; and to use President Edward's language, "is the sum total of the matter." We never go about to inquire what is the cause of our moral affections being as they are, or whether they have any cause, aside from our own powers and susceptibilities, and the objects which act upon them. We know that these affections are *our* exercises, and not another's—the development of our own powers. In other words, we perceive that it is we ourselves, that love or hate, hope or fear, as the case may be, and that these exercises are morally good, or morally evil, as they correspond with, or violate the Divine law. This is all we perceive, or are conscious of, and if we suppose something farther, we do but deceive ourselves, by traveling into the region of imagination or conjecture.

But I hear it asked, do not men naturally suppose, when they have had wrong feelings or emotions, that they might have had other, and different feelings, if they had been so disposed, or if they had pleased? and is it not upon this ground that they condemn themselves for the feelings which they had? That men sometimes have confused thoughts upon this subject, there is no doubt; but that they have had such thoughts as the inquirer supposes, we can by no means concede—unless they greatly mistake the facts in the case. There is an absurdity on the very face of the supposition, that they might have had different feelings or emotions, if they had *been so disposed*, for what is it to be *so disposed*, but to have these other and different feelings themselves?

which is as much as to say that they might have had different feelings, if they had had different feelings. Nor does the supposition that they might have had different feelings if they *had pleased*, afford a sense, less fraught with error or absurdity. It implies that they might have had other feelings and emotions, if they had desired, or chosen them. But feelings or emotions never arise in consequence of being desired or chosen, but spontaneously, in view of their appropriate objects; and besides, if they were desired or chosen, they were desired or chosen for some end; and what is that end? If you say it was their own agreeableness or pleasingness to the mind—then they were possessed already, and did not arise in consequence of being chosen. If you say it was for some other end, the choice would be unavailing, as it neither involves them nor produces them. Produce them, it cannot, according to any law of mind known or admitted by any respectable writer on this subject. The simple matter is, when men have wrong feelings, and they are conscious of the *wrong*, they judge of it by the nature of these feelings as compared with the rule of duty. Come *how* they will, come *whence* they will, they intuitively perceive them to be wrong—wrong in themselves apart from the circumstances which preceded or attended them. True it is, other things may be perceived at the same time. We may perceive that one wrong feeling has indirectly contributed to another, or that the absence of right feelings has been the occasion of wrong ones; still it is manifest that both the *right* and the *wrong* can be measured and determined only by the acknowledged rule of duty. The feeling must be compared with the rule; and this done, all is done which is necessary to show its agreement, or disagreement, with the rule, and to fix in the mind an unwavering conviction of its good or ill desert. The perception of the rule

is a perception of obligation; and the perception of conformity, or non-conformity, is a perception of having done good or evil.

[NOTE A.] But some may suppose that this writer makes moral evil to consist in two things, and not in one; namely, in a man's *doing wrong*, when he does as he pleases, and his *pleasure's* being wrong; or, in other words, in having his heart wrong, and doing wrong from his heart: and by the same rule, that virtue must consist in two things—in a man's having his heart right, and doing right from his heart. He admits, indeed, that such are the common notions of mankind, who do not always carefully separate their conceptions on this subject. There are certain actions, *overt* actions, which they esteem right or wrong, but not as separate from the deliberate choice of the mind from which they proceeded. These actions must be *voluntary* in their judgment, or they would be neither blame nor praise worthy: of course, their moral character, so far as they have any, must be derived from the fact that they were deliberately chosen; and when they come to inquire into the character of this choice, which they pronounce either good or bad, they take into view the principle or motive from which it originates. It is a good choice, or a bad choice, as it was moved or excited by a good or bad feeling. This alone marks its intent or design; and on this the mind fixes as that which is essential to its moral character. If the intent be good, the choice was good; if the intent be evil, the choice was evil. And though the vulgar do not ordinarily separate their conceptions in this manner, yet they show, by their language, in a thousand forms, that they have such conceptions; and that they trace all moral good or evil up to the heart, or the state of the affections; and that, in their judgment, there is neither virtue nor vice apart from these. That this was the sentiment of Edwards himself, there can be no doubt, since he repeatedly intimates that it is the disposition of the man which gives character to the man; and since it is one of his cardinal points, "*that principles do not derive their goodness from actions, but actions from principles,*" while he expressly declares that a good choice is no farther good than the disposition from which it flows.



## LECTURE IV.

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### ON CREATION.

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IN our examination of the Divine decrees, we have seen that they are necessarily *universal*, reaching alike to all beings and events, and through all time; that in the order of nature, they precede whatsoever comes to pass through the agency of God, whether that agency be exerted either more immediately or remotely. The *works* of God are, of course, the development of his decrees, and may be comprehended under two grand divisions—the works of creation, and the works of providence. Nothing which God does, or in any way causes to be done, but may be included under one or the other of these divisions.

As to the work of creation, it has been defined, “God’s making *all things of nothing*, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.” No objection can be taken to this definition, if it is intended to comprehend the whole of God’s work, in giving *birth* to materials, as well as in giving *form*, for it is manifest that animals and vegetables were created from matter already in existence.

The original word *ברא* to *create*, as well as its kindred forms, is used with considerable latitude in the Scriptures, as may be seen by referring to Lexicographers.

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According to Parkhurst, this word denotes the production of either *substance* or *form*—the *creation*, or accretion of substance or matter.

(1.) He gives it the sense of *creating*, or producing into being, Genesis, i. 1, where it is said, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." This cannot relate to *form*, he remarks, because it follows in the next verse, *that the earth was without form, or in loose atoms*. He assigns to it the same meaning in the twenty-seventh verse, where man is said to be made in the image of God, because this had respect to the *spiritual* and immortal part of man.

(2.) He gives it the sense of forming by an accretion or concretion of matter, Genesis, i. 21, where God is said to create the monsters of the deep.

(3.) A third sense which he ascribes to it, is to perform somewhat that is wonderful, or extraordinary—to make, as it were, a new creation; Numbers, xvi. 30: "But if God *create a creation*"—that is, "if he shall work an unprecedented miracle." \* \* \* See also, Exodus, xxxiv. 10, and Jeremiah, xxxi. 22.

(4.) He gives this word the sense, also, of *renewing*, or *making anew*; of *preparing* and *adorning*, which shows that the sacred writers have used it with considerable variety of meaning.

*Gesenius* gives much the same account as to the import of this word. Its first sense, he remarks, is to *hew*, or *hew out*; and that in some of its forms, it is used to signify *being born*. He allows it the sense of *smooth*, and to *make smooth*, but more commonly to *form*, or to *make*, though he says nothing as to the mode of forming, whether with, or without, pre-existing materials.

*Pictet* has endeavored to show that there are only two senses in which the word *create* can be understood strictly and properly; the *one*, when it describes that work of God by which he drew something from nothing,

and the other, when it marks that operation by which God makes a thing different from what it was before—and where there was no previous disposition to the change.

It is a marvelous thing, he remarks, that a small nut should produce a great tree—nevertheless, because the nut contains the *semen* or *germ* of the tree, we do not call this a *creation*, but a *generation*. But to make a living man from a dead stone, would be a *creation*. It is a thing which surpasses the powers of nature, and there is none but God, who could, of stones, raise up children to Abraham. In the last sense, he supposes it is said that God created man of the dust of the earth, and that he formed Eve from one of Adam's ribs. For neither the dust nor the rib was naturally capable of receiving the form which God subsequently gave. There was here no *germ*, no *previous disposition* to the change which was produced; no such preparation as nature demands in her subjects, when she would exhibit them in a new form. Whence it would appear, that no less power is required in this second kind of creation, than in the first; and that both demand a power which is infinite."

Such works we cheerfully concede, are properly denominated a creation, and clearly indicate a power no less than infinite. But we see no reason for limiting the word *create*, or *creation*, to such extraordinary operations. Most certainly, neither in the Scriptures, nor in the customary forms of speech, is the term thus limited. Not unfrequently is it used by the sacred writers to express God's works of providence, where no extraordinary change is produced, but only such modification, or disposition of things, as occur in a regular train of his operations. At the same time, it is not to be doubted, that it is sometimes used to signify the production of something out of nothing, or giving existence where previously there was none. It has this meaning, most obviously, when Moses says, "In the beginning God



created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form, and void." (Genesis, i. 1.) Here we are directed not only to the *cause*, but to the *beginning* of things; not to that state which they afterwards assumed under the forming hand of their Creator, when the work was complete, but to the bringing into existence the first *principles of things*—the *materials*, so to speak, of which the several forms of organized being were fashioned by the Almighty.

Other passages of Scripture point us to the same fact, no less obviously, though not perhaps with the same clearness and precision. When St. John says, "In the beginning was the word, or the *λογος*; the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made," he plainly carries us up to the same high original of created existence, as Moses had done before him. The *λογος* who was in the beginning with God, is spoken of as the immediate and efficient cause of all things that were made, or began to be. Paul, also, in distinctly ascribing to Christ the creation of all things in heaven and earth, whether they be visible, or invisible, clearly indicates a production from nothing. He declares, moreover, "that Christ was before all things, and that by him all things consist."

To understand this passage with reference to the *mere organization* of things, would not only be an unreasonable *limitation* of the Apostle's meaning, but would suppose a sense which could have no application to the invisible part of Christ's *workmanship*, to wit, his creation of angels, as is commonly understood by thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. Besides, how could Christ be *before all things*, if some things existed antecedent to his creative act, and existed as the materials upon which his power was exerted?

That the Apostle intended to speak of a creation from

*non-entity* is the more probable, from the language which he holds upon this subject in the 11th of Hebrews. "Through faith," says he, "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God: so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear." What then were they made of? (it might naturally be demanded.) Not of pre-existent matter: for that belongs to things which do appear. His language naturally imports that *visible things* were not made of *visible things*, or *material things* of things which are material; but arose into existence at the sovereign command of God, and arose out of nothing. The *Word of God* is given as the only source of the mighty fabric of the universe. In this, the Apostle evidently opposed himself to the philosophers of that period, who held either that the world was eternal, or was formed out of materials which had no beginning; and his opposition consists not only in stating the fact to be different from what they had supposed—but the way in which we come to the knowledge of that fact. "By faith," saith he, "we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God." Reason might trace the operation of the Divine hand in the visible frame of the universe; but reason alone would never rise to the sublime notion that God spake the universe into existence from nothing. This is too mighty an idea for the human mind to excogitate, by its own unassisted powers. Even now that the fact is revealed, there is nothing which more astonishes us, or baffles our conceptions, the moment we attempt to meditate upon it. That something should be produced from nothing—that the universe of creatures, whether they be visible or invisible, should rise up at the call of the Almighty, and stand forth in all their majesty and glory, is not only the miracle of miracles, but the greatest of all mysteries. Still, this is no reason why we should doubt the fact. The Bible asserts it, and reason legiti-

mately exercised, coincides with the Bible. As to the *modus operandi*, it plainly lies beyond the reach of our faculties ; but this is true, also, with respect to *causation universally* : we see the changes that are produced, and the order in which they occur ; but we know not *how* they are produced. A total darkness *here* rests upon all the works of God. In the fact of creation, we are apt to stumble at the thought, that it should arise out of nothing ; and yet, from the necessity of the case, we know not how it could be otherwise. What materials were there, out of which to form the universe, till the Almighty had created them to his hand ? Matter, surely, could not be eternal, unless we allow it a necessary existence, contrary to all just reasoning from its known qualities and attributes. And as to the spirit, though eternal, as it exists in the Deity, yet since it would be absurd to suppose that his all-perfect Being is capable of division, multiplication or change, we are left to conclude that other spirits, if they exist, must exist by creation, no less than matter, and by creation, as absolutely from nothing. To suppose otherwise, would be to suppose some change in the substance of the Deity, or at least, a division of that substance, since out of it, according to this hypothesis, other spirits were formed.

Allowing then, that God has created something out of nothing, still it is important to inquire what that something is. We are in the habit of considering it as *being* or *substance*, and either *matter* or *mind*. But what evidence of this ? May it not be some property or attribute, or merely an assemblage of these ? It is plain it must be something distinct from God, or it could not be anything *created*, unless creation consists in a mere modification of Deity. Hence philosophers and divines who have admitted a *creation* at all—I mean a creation from nothing—have, with one voice, allowed it to be something *ad extra* in relation to God ; *something without* or

aside from him ; not in its *origin*, but in its *result* ; *something* which is not God, neither his *substance*, nor his *attributes*, nor an *exercise of these* ; but the fruit or effect of his creative energy.

But if that which is *created* be something distinct from God, it cannot be a mere property or attribute, unless we can suppose a property without a subject, or an attribute which is the attribute of nothing. Nor can it be a mere assemblage of attributes or properties ; for the absurdity of a property without a subject, or an attribute without a substance to which it belongs, is in no degree lessened by supposing an assemblage of these, or many instead of one.

We are aware, indeed, that a few modern philosophers have adopted a different sentiment, and have defined matter to be nothing but an assemblage of properties or qualities, and mind only a union of perceptions, or a series of exercises, which has neither principle nor foundation, except the immediate agency of God. In short, that neither *matter* nor *mind* is anything distinct from its properties ; and that *these* are nothing but *God's action* ; and hence, all the known properties of bodies, if not of mind, are regarded as the steady laws of Divine operation. We cannot think that such a doctrine will ever become universal, as it seems to stand opposed to some of the radical principles of our constitution. Men will not soon be reasoned out of a conviction of their personal identity, nor out of their belief in an external world. We take it to be a principle as certain as any of the axioms on which our reasonings are grounded, *that every property has a subject to which it belongs* ; and that we can no more avoid this reference in our thoughts, however ignorant we may be of the nature of the subject, than we can avoid the conclusion, that every *act* implies an agent, whose *act* it is, and every feeling and perception, *some being* who feels and perceives. This is surely the natural

train of our thoughts, if it be not one of their unchangeable laws; and under its influence it is, that Christian philosophers and divines, of every age, have, with few exceptions, adopted the opinion, that creation is a *work*, or something done, and not a mere *energy*; and that that which is *created* is properly a being or substance, and is either matter or mind. This is the view which Paul appeared to take of the subject, when he said, "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God." He speaks of some things being done, not merely as a change or an event which should leave no trace of its existence behind, but as a *work* which stands forth as the mighty monument of the power which accomplished it.

Such, as it appears to us, is the plain, common-sense notion of the case, as the principles of all languages testify, and as the Word of God abundantly confirms. "God spake, and it was done; he commanded, and *it* stood fast." But *what* stood fast? unless it were the *work* of his own hands, something which had a positive and continued existence? He made heaven, earth, air, sea, and all that is therein, everything after its kind, and every living thing with power to propagate its kind; and the language employed in this statement, can obviously convey to the common mind no other idea, than that these were so many separate existences, brought into being by the Almighty, with their varied attributes, qualities and powers. But philosophers are not to be taken by the snare which catches the vulgar. They have a much deeper insight into things. The Word of God was not designed to instruct in the principles of a deep and recondite philosophy; but with higher and more spiritual views, accommodates its statements to the notions and apprehensions of the unlettered multitude. Though it speak, therefore, of *God, men, angels, devils, things visible* and *things invisible*, as having a distinct and positive ex-

istence, accompanied with various qualities and attributes, it is no argument that there is in reality any such existence, separate from *attributes, properties, qualities* and *powers*. These, after all, may be the sum of created being, if not the sum of uncreated being.

Let us resort, then, to principles independent of the Bible, and try the question on the ground of human reason. And here the first inquiry is, whether every man, be he philosopher or otherwise, does not go upon the principle, that he has a *distinct individual existence*; or that he is a *person* in the ordinary sense of the term, possessed of certain attributes and powers? and not that he is a series of acts, or an assemblage of attributes? I am inclined to think, if he will allow himself to answer, all prejudice and system apart, that he will frankly confess that he cannot *persuade himself that he is not himself*, although this self appears to be a strange indefinable thing. In other words, that he is *conscious* of a *distinct personality*, or, if you like the phrase better, that *he believes himself to be a person, having the realities and properties of being*, altogether as *truly*, though not as independently, as God who created him. This person he always denotes by the term *I*—a person sufficiently dear to him, and whose opinions and interests he is never backward to cherish. And as he thus firmly believed in his own identity—so he has substantially the same belief concerning his fellow-men. Hence he constantly speaks of them, whatever may be his philosophy, as having a *real, positive existence*, to which he attributes involuntarily certain properties and powers. He can no more divest himself of the idea that they are persons, or beings, in the strict sense of the terms, and not mere qualities, properties, or events—than he can divest himself of the belief that they have any existence at all. He may deny their distinct individuality, or profess his doubts concerning it; but every moment he acts upon

the belief that they are persons, having personal properties, or powers. There is not a man that lives, who does not form all his plans, and shape his whole course of action under the influence of this inwrought and unchangeable belief.

The same remarks apply with undiminished force to the belief of an external world in general. Such a belief all men have—a belief in *things* without, as having a positive and continued existence, in distinction from their own ideas and impressions, and no less in distinction from mere properties and powers. Nor is this belief like that which is sometimes occasioned by the illusion of our senses, which may be corrected by more careful inquiry. It goes deep into the very constitution of the mind, and can neither be shaken off nor corrected by all the art and ingenuity of philosophical investigation. And well for us is it that it cannot; for the preservation of our being depends upon it, and perhaps, too, all our moral distinctions and our consequent accountability. Certainly, it would seem that we could not discriminate between man and man, nor pass any judgment upon ourselves, without presupposing our belief in *personal identity*—or, which is the same thing, in the personal existence of a being, aside from his character or his qualities. And yet what identity can there be, in *mind* at least, if the subject and its properties, or *mind* and its *operations*, be not distinct? Bishop Berkeley himself was well aware of this; and therefore, though he denied the existence of matter, and even the possibility of it, contended for the existence of mind, as a substance distinct from its *qualities*, *powers*, or *operations*. The same is the case with Kirwan, the zealous and able defender of Berkeley. He insists that the mind, though known only by its properties and powers, is nevertheless a *being* or *substance* distinct from its phenomena, and introduces Mr. Merian, one of the ablest metaphysicians of his age,

as replying to Mr. Hume in the following manner. [The extract is taken from the Memoirs of Berlin for 1793.] "According to Mr. Hume," says this able writer, "we are nothing but an aggregate of *phenomena*. Now I ask if a phenomenon can exist without being perceived? If not, I ask who perceives it? To this question there are but three possible answers: either it is perceived by itself, or by some other phenomenon, or by something that is not a phenomenon. Now, a phenomenon perceiving itself, would be strange indeed: sounds hearing themselves, smells smelling themselves, &c. Besides, in this case there could be no comparison of the phenomena, nor consequently any judgment founded on such comparison. Secondly, to say that phenomena can perceive other phenomena is still, if possible, more absurd; for instance, smells hearing sounds, sounds seeing colors. \* \* \* Therefore, thirdly, there must be a subject or *substratum* of these perceptions, of which they are modifications. Moreover, sensations of one sort are often compared with sensations of another sort, as those of sight with those of hearing. Now, can vision judge of hearing? or colors judge of sounds? May we not have two simultaneous sensations contrary to each other? May we not feel extreme heat in one hand, and extreme cold in the other? Can then two contrary sensations coexist without any subject? But it were idle to pursue this matter farther."

I own this argument strikes me powerfully; and if it stood alone, it would convince me that a subject and its properties are distinct things, and that the latter necessarily presuppose the former. But the argument does not stand alone. We have a deep-seated belief, I have already remarked, in our own personal existence, and in that of others, aside from our *qualities, actions, or powers*—a belief which prevails with undiminished strength, at all times and places, while reason itself is prolonged.



But whence the origin of this belief? Can it rationally be ascribed to anything but the forming hand of our Creator, who has deeply engraven it upon the inmost folds of the mind? Has he laid us under a necessity, then, of believing what is not true? or shall we admit the correctness of these primary and immovable impressions? To me it appears dangerous to call in question such original and invariable dictates of the human mind; for if we may be wrong here, who knows that we are right anywhere? What security can we have for virtue? or to what tribunal shall we make our appeal even for its very existence? How can we be certain that there is a God? We infer his being from his works, because we believe that they are not self-existent, and could not come into being without a cause; but this sentiment, that nothing can exist without a cause, is neither more original, more uniform, nor more stable, than the belief we have in our own personal existence, as the subject of properties, qualities and powers. Call this belief an *illusion*, and who shall confirm us in the correctness of the other sentiment? But there is little danger, after all. Nature is true to her purpose; and men, though they may profess their scepticism, will continue to believe in their own existence, and in an external world. They will think that mind is something, and matter something; and though each is known only by its properties, still they cannot fail to believe that *both exist*, as the subject of the properties which they severally display.



## LECTURE V.

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### ON CREATION.

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God, says an eloquent writer, is a sun, whose brightness our eyes cannot behold; whose transcendent light blinds us, so that we cannot steadfastly contemplate it, without being dazzled and confounded. But this sun presents itself to us in a mirror; this mirror is the universe, where God has exhibited to us an admirable portrait of his perfections. And to this Paul alludes, when he says, "that the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and majesty, are clearly seen by the things that are made."

In our remarks, previously submitted, on the subject of Creation, we endeavored to make it appear *that that which was created*, was something distinct from God, and was neither his substance nor his attributes, nor an exercise of these; but something *ad extra* in relation to him—a work or creature of God. That if this something was distinct from God, it could not be a mere property or attribute, nor an assemblage of these, but a being or substance of which properties and attributes could be affirmed. To suppose an attribute without a substance, or a property without a subject, we considered as involving the same kind of absurdity as to suppose an act without an agent, or a feeling or perception without some being that feels or perceives.

We attempted to confirm our views, not only by a reference to the common principles of all languages, and to the forms of speech employed in the Bible, but by an argument drawn from the belief which every man has in his own personal identity, and in that of his fellow-men—a belief which compels him to admit that he is a person, or being, the subject of properties, qualities or powers. And we attempted to show, farther, that this primary and deep-seated belief was a law of our constitution, as original and as stable as any of the first principles upon which our reasonings are grounded, and that if we called this in question, we had no sure footing for any of our principles or reasonings whatsoever; they having no higher authority than the original and primary feelings of our own minds.

We now raise another question, closely connected with the foregoing discussion, namely, on the supposition that we are right in supposing that every property implies a subject, and every attribute a substance, is the converse or counterpart of this true, that every subject implies a property, and every substance an attribute of some kind? or which comes to the same thing, that every created existence is necessarily, and from the mere fact of its creation, possessed of certain properties, qualities or powers?

That every created being has certain relations to its Creator, is just as certain as that it has any existence; and if there are other beings, that it bears corresponding relations to them. To suppose otherwise, would be to suppose that two lines might be drawn in the universe, and yet be neither parallel nor angular in regard to each other.

That every substance has some property involved in its existence, is a proposition we should think no less evident. For it is just as inconceivable that there should be substances without properties, as properties without

substances, or either without relations. Take away every supposable property from a substance, and what would remain? What is matter without solidity or extension, without attraction, repulsion, or any other property cognizable by the senses? What is mind without sensation, perception or reflection—without memory, will or desire? Strip it of its qualities, and you strip it of its being; because it seems as impossible that it should exist without these, as that it should exist and not exist at the same time. A substance and its properties, at least those which are primary, mutually involve each other, just as a substance and its relations. But relations, it may be said, have no real or positive existence. They are only modes of being, or the abstract notions we form of substances in regard to each other, or in regard to something which we suppose to exist; *out of our minds*, they have no existence at all. It is a fact, nevertheless, that we necessarily form these notions as often as the related substances are presented. Two tennis balls are placed upon the table. As soon as I perceive them, the relations of *distance* or *contiguity*, of *equality* or *inequality*, are perceived. That is to say, these substances excite in my mind such ideas of relation, or, they *thus* affect me; and because they thus affect me, I believe and pronounce them to be thus related. And I believe, moreover, that while the substances in all respects remain the same, and their position and other circumstances the same, these *relations* will be the same.

Nor does it make any difference in my belief, whether it be supposed that these ideas of relation were excited in my mind by the immediate agency of God, or by the tennis balls themselves. I firmly believe that these relations exist, and that they will continue to exist, unless some change shall take place in the organization or position of the substances related. The relations are seen

to be inevitable upon the supposition of the substances, nor can I be made to believe that they depend in any measure upon my perceiving them. The fact of these relations, in the circumstances supposed, is an eternal truth which nothing can destroy—just as it is a truth that the opposite sides of a parallelogram must forever remain equal while the figure is preserved.

With the same certainty, if not for the same reason, will the *properties* of a substance stand connected with the *substance*. The existence of the substance involves the existence of the properties—certainly of those which are essential. A particle of matter, for instance, would be just what it is, and its properties or powers in relation to the material system just what they are, if there were no perceiving eye to observe them. They necessarily coexist and imply each other, though in a different way—the one as a subject, and the other as the property belonging to the subject. Whether the properties of any substance are to be regarded simply as its *relations*, we undertake not now to determine; we merely assert as a fact, *that the one cannot exist where the other does not exist*. This we think must be true, whether we adopt the old philosophy of a substratum in which the properties inhere, or the system of Brown, which affirms *that the properties of substances are but the substances themselves*. The latter scheme supposes that there is nothing in the universe but substances, and that what we call their properties and powers are mere abstract notions of the relations which the substances bear to each other in the changes which take place among them, and the order in which the changes occur.

Fire has the property of melting metals—water the property of melting salt—that is, these changes occur when the substances concerned come into contact with each other, and in circumstances in which, according to the laws of their being, such changes are known to fol-

low. In these cases, we remark the relation of antecedent and consequent, or of cause and effect, while the changes that take place in consequence of this relation, indicate the properties or powers of the bodies that are thus related. Still, this philosopher maintains that there is here no real positive existence, but in the substances supposed—the fire and the metals in the one case, and the water and the salt in the other. If there is any positive existence besides, *what* and *where* is it? Does it lie in the changes which have occurred? They are obviously nothing but a *modification* of what existed before. Does it lie in the mere *susceptibility* of change? This is only the relation which one substance bears to another, which in given circumstances effects a change in it, as its antecedent or its cause. Thus, for example, *salt* has the *susceptibility* of being melted; but it is only in relation to the *water*, which is said to have the power of melting it. It has not this *susceptibility* absolutely, nor in relation to other bodies, which never produce the specified change. True it is that the salt and the water must be brought together, or the liquefaction will not follow; but this is only a change in position, and adds nothing to the existence of either body. There is no circumstance connected with the *susceptibility* supposed, which indicates it to be anything but a *relation* which the salt has to the water that dissolves it.

How then is it, with respect to the *power* of producing change? The *water* in which this *power* is supposed to be lodged, is said to *melt* the salt. What is there here, the abettor of this philosophy would ask, but the naked substance? Do you say the *power* of melting the salt? Truly, he would reply—but what is *power*? Is it any positive existence in *rerum natura*? or is it expressive only of the *fact*, that there will be a change in the salt, on the application of water? What more is there *in* or *about* the process, except it be our belief in the invaria-

bleness of the sequence ? or the certainty of the result ? Is anything else known, can anything else be conceived ?

If this be a fair statement of the case, (but whether it be so or not, it is not our intention to affirm,) it would seem, indeed, to follow, that *power* is neither more nor less than *invariableness* of *antecedence*, in relation to some change which takes place, as its invariable consequence ; and therefore, in this respect, like *susceptibility*, merely marks a certain relation which one substance has to another, in the changes which occur in the regular order of events. Should this be admitted a correct view of the *phenomena of nature*, it cannot be doubted, for a moment, that the *powers, properties* and *qualities* of substances, whether spiritual or material, are *inseparable* from the substances themselves ; that if the substances exist, their properties and powers will exist (we speak of those which are essential) ; and to annihilate the latter, you must annihilate the former. The reason is, according to the present hypothesis, they are not so properly different things, as the same things, under different aspects ; the whole of created existence being only the substances which God has made, and their properties and powers nothing more than the relations which these substances bear to each other, in the changes which take place among them.

We do not avow our belief of the entire correctness of this system ; but if it fail, we are fully convinced that it does not fail in the article of showing, that wherever there are substances, there will inevitably be properties or powers, as an inseparable adjunct of their being ; and that the mystery in this case, if mystery there be, lies not in the fact, that substances should have properties or powers, and thus accomplish something, but in the *mere fact of their existence*.

Let this system, then, be sustained, or otherwise it will make no difference in the question before us ; for if any

created substance exist, it is inconceivable that it should not involve *powers* and *susceptibilities* of some kind ; for that which *affects* nothing, and is affected by nothing, most surely is nothing.

There is no escape from this conclusion, unless it could be shown that the property of a thing is something different from the power of a thing, and that the *power* of a thing can be distinguished from a *power to affect* something, or to *be affected* by something.

Let any man settle in his own mind distinctly, what he means by *properties*, *qualities*, or *powers*, and *how* he comes to know that they are predicable of any particular substance, whether matter or mind, and he will perceive at once that he can form no idea of an *inefficacious property* or a *powerless power* ; but that in every case where he admits the existence of a property, he admits it either as the *cause* or the *susceptibility* of change. *One or the other it must be* ; and when considered *actively*, it is always regarded as a cause. Be it so, says an objector ; but who knows that there is any substance in the case ? Why may not properties be all ? It is these alone we perceive ; and why resort to a substance in which they inhere ? Can we prove the existence of any such substance ? Why not believe that properties or powers compose the whole of created being ? We answer, for the same reason precisely, that we neither do, nor can believe, that they compose the whole of *uncreated being*.

We believe that God is a *substance*, a Being, a Person, and that he is possessed of certain attributes or powers. So he is revealed to us, and such our minds, unsophisticated by the subtleties of reasoning, naturally conceive him to be.

Atheistical philosophers have indeed propounded the abstract theory of a God, without any unity of perception, will, or design ; or rather they have denied the existence of God, and substituted in his stead a



mere *principle*, or *efficacy*. But I know of no Christian divines who ever went to this length. They have sometimes supposed that the Divine attributes were resolvable into the Divine essence, or that *attributes*, as they exist in God, and apart from our view, are not distinguishable from his *essence*. But they have never changed the tables, and denied his essence, as an Uncreated Being. Yet why might not this be done? if the principle just laid down be a sound one—that we know nothing of *essences* or *substances*, aside from qualities or attributes, or in distinction from them, and therefore that the former have no claim to be the object of our belief? Surely, we know nothing of *God's essence*, but from the exhibition of his attributes or powers; yet from these we infer the *reality* of his Being. We see everywhere in his works, the *marks of design*, if nothing else; and our reason teaches us, that that which *contrives* and has *design*, is not a mere principle, but a person. “These capacities,” says Dr. Paley, “constitute *personality*, for they imply consciousness and thought. They require that which can perceive an end, or purpose—as well as the power of providing means and directing them to their end. They require a centre, in which perceptions unite, and from which volitions flow, which is mind. The acts of a mind prove the existence of a mind; and in whatever a mind resides is a person. The seat of intellect is a person.”

We shall probably not demur to this reasoning when applied to God. Why should we hesitate, when it is applied to the creatures of God? If the exhibition of his attributes carry us to the belief of his existence, why should not the exhibition of their attributes carry us to the belief of their existence? the properties of mind convincing us of mind, and the properties of matter convincing us of matter. No reason can be assigned why the conclusion should be admitted in the one case, and not in the other. Nor do I imagine that there is any

doubt as to the *reality* of the fact; for whether we will or not, our belief is permanently fixed on this great subject, as every man's actions plainly demonstrate. It is a law of our constitution, to believe a subject where we find a property, and a property where we find a subject.

The only legitimate conclusion, then, to be drawn from the necessary coexistence of substances, and their properties or powers, is either that maintained by Brown—that substances and their powers are not so properly different things, as the same things under different aspects, namely, the substances and their relations; or, the more ancient and common doctrine, that though the essence of a thing is to be distinguished from the properties of a thing, or from its *modes*, yet, in the nature of things, they are inseparable—so that one cannot exist without the other, nor be destroyed without destroying the other.

Give existence, then, and you give relations—give existence and you give properties and powers, which will continue as long as the existence itself continues, unmodified and undiminished in their energy, till some change takes place in the substance to which they belong, or in the relations which it bears to other substances. (See note A.)

This, so far as I have been able to collect, was the current doctrine, both of philosophers and of the vulgar, antecedent to the days of Descartes. And it is now the fixed belief of all men who have not been entangled by the dogmas of a subtle philosophy. On this sentiment has been founded the doctrine of second causes, through the medium of which it has been supposed that God governs the world.

To me it appears impossible to show that there are any such things as *second causes* or *means* in the universe, without admitting that the properties and powers of a being are inseparable from its existence. For it is only

by its properties or powers that it does anything, or makes itself known.

If it does nothing, it surely does not affect me ; if it does not affect me, how can I know that it exists ?

This simple statement might seem to settle the question forever. But when the mind gets involved with other speculations it finds a resort in *words* and *forms of expression*, which seem incapable, to say the least, of any clear definition. Hence, it is sometimes replied to the foregoing statement, that though a second cause (the light for instance) does not affect me by its own power, yet it is made to do it by the power of the Deity. It is a *mean* in God's hands of accomplishing what it seems to accomplish.

Certainly we shall admit that it is a *mean* in God's hands ; because it derived its being and powers, whatever they are, from God, and both are continued at his pleasure. But has it been well considered what is implied in its being a *mean in God's hands* ? If it has no power how can it be a *mean* ? Can either God or man work by a mean which is absolutely powerless ? Is not the supposition wholly inconceivable ? Try this question in your own minds, and see if you can find a case where an instrument absolutely powerless can be employed ? Nay, try another question. See if you can tell *what a mean or instrument is stripped of all power*. Let it be *fire, earth, air, water*, no matter what. Strip it of all power, or, which is the same thing, strip it of every property, and then tell us what it is.

Perhaps, however, when it is said that means have no power in themselves, all that is meant is, that they have no power to accomplish the particular end for which they are employed as a *mean*, and not that they have no power in any respect ; for, in that case, it would seem that their use would be impossible, and it could not be known that they existed. But why, let me ask, should

it be supposed, that they have no *power in themselves*, in this particular case, more than in any other case, where their properties or powers are displayed? If they are powerless in this connection, why not in every other? or if they exert an influence anywhere, why not *here*? If, in the supposed case, they have no fitness nor tendency to accomplish the effect, where is the *wisdom* of employing them, and what is their *use*? What do they actually do in the case? There are only three suppositions which can be made on the subject. The first is, that they really produce the effect which they seem to produce. The second is, that they accomplish nothing, but the effect proceeds wholly from the power of God, immediately exerted; and the third is, that the effect proceeds partly from the immediate agency of God, and partly from the intrinsic force of the means. If the first or last supposition be true, *means in themselves* have some power, and do actually accomplish something. But if the second supposition contain the truth, then means are indeed *powerless*, and as powerless when employed as when unemployed; for no part of the effect is attributable to them; and if, in all other connections, they were equally *inefficacious*, it could not be known that they existed, except by special revelation.

Besides, in this supposition, can anybody tell what is meant by the *use of means*? If they really accomplish nothing, and in their own nature are fitted to accomplish nothing, how does God work by them? What is their *instrumentality*? Nothing is done through their *agency*; for it is plain they have no agency, the whole effect proceeding entirely from the immediate exertion of the Divine Power. On this supposition, too, what becomes of the *Divine wisdom*, which is generally thought to appear in a wonderful adaptation of means to their ends? If means, in fact, accomplish nothing, they are fitted to accomplish nothing, and all wisdom ceases in their appli-

cation, there being just as much connection between the *breath* of a musquetoe and the *falling* of a tree, or the *existence* of an oyster and the *production* of a poem, as between the best-adapted means and their end: that is to say, there is no *instrumental* or causal connection whatever; all is done by the immediate and positive efficiency of God.

But is this a fair statement of the argument? It is not admitted, it will be said, that means are absolutely powerless when employed; they are so only in themselves, and when unemployed. When actually employed by the Deity, they *have power*; for God gives them a power. Tell us, then, what is meant by God's giving them a power. Does he impart to them a quality which they had not before? so that it is now *their* quality or power, and not *his*? If this be the fact, then in truth they do something, and something *in* and *by themselves*. But if God imparts to them this power the moment they are employed, what objection can there be to his having imparted it to them before, and to his having lodged it in the very constitution of their being? On the other hand, if he does not impart to them any new and distinct quality or power, and cause it to become *theirs*, not *his*, then this power is but *his* after all, and *not theirs*, and they are equally powerless as before; then, also, it is *his* agency which is exerted, and *not theirs*, and the effect is solely to be attributed to him, and attributed to him as the immediate and exclusive agent in the case. Thus we arrive at the same conclusion as in a former part of the argument, and with augmented conviction that it is the legitimate result of well-grounded premises.

The whole subject, however, may be set in a still stronger light, by adverting to this general, but obvious *alternative*—that what we call the properties or powers of created beings are, *universally*, either the properties and powers of such beings, or they are the mere action

or agency of God. There is here no middle ground, because what is not a *creature's* power is *God's*. *Property, quality* and *power*, when considered actively, (and in this place we so consider them,) are nothing but Brown's immediate and invariable antecedents, or the regular producers of change. *Property, quality* and *power*, are here used for the substances in which such attributes are supposed to belong; or, according to an older philosophy, they are simply the causes of change. Now, these causes are either the powers and agency of the creature, or they are the powers and agency of God. If they belong to creatures, then creatures have an agency, and actually accomplish something. If they belong to God, then there is no creature agency that we know of, and consequently no creatures; for creatures, if they exist, can be known only by their properties or agencies. If these agencies, therefore, are not *theirs*, but *God's*, we have no evidence of the existence of creatures, but must regard *creation* as a nullity or a dream.

Let me illustrate this by a familiar example. I suppose a cubic inch of gold lies before me. What is the proof of its existence? Certainly nothing but its properties which act upon my senses: it affects my vision, it affects my touch. If I take it in my hand, I perceive not only its solidity and extension, but its gravity. If I throw it on the table, or on the floor, it produces sound. But in all this, I am conscious only of certain *sensations*; whence do I learn the existence of the gold? Why; according to the dictates of common sense, I refer my sensations to the gold, as their cause. It was *that* I say, which thus variously affected me. But *did it thus affect me?* am I certain? It was *that*, or something else, or my sensations have no cause. What am I to believe? I can believe but one of two things—that it was the gold which *affected* me by its own intrinsic agency, which I denomi-

nate its properties or its powers—or it was God. There is room for no other supposition, and no other will probably be made. It might, indeed, be said that the effect was partly owing to one of these causes, and partly to the other. But those who are chiefly concerned in this argument, will doubtless admit that my sensations were produced, either by the gold itself, or by the immediate agency of God. Now if I yield to the first part of this alternative, I have not only common sense to support me, but I have evidence of the existence of the gold, as the workmanship of God, and can judge of the nature of its existence by its properties and powers. But if I take the other side of the alternative, I give up all evidence of the gold's existence, and regard its properties or agencies as the mere agency of God. Thus I dispose of the existence of the gold, and of all material substances universally. For since the supposed properties of matter are nothing but the agency of Deity, what is there left to constitute this substance, but an *unknown substratum*, whose existence our opponents in this argument stoutly deny? A material *creation* is, then, out of the question; and, by the same rules of philosophizing, an *immaterial one no less*. For if I allow the properties of a *material* substance to be nothing but the stated action of the Deity, how can I avoid the conclusion that the properties of an *immaterial* substance are, in like manner, only his stated action? I know nothing of *matter* or of *mind*, but by its powers; and if these powers are not predicable of a created substance in the one case, why should they be in the other? or, to change the form of the argument, if the supposed properties of matter ought to be considered as the mere agency of God, what reason can be given, why the same opinion should not be adopted with respect to the properties of mind? Most certainly this conclusion will follow, if we lay down as a principle the doctrine contended for by some, “*That*

*the immediate agency of God is universally the cause, and the proximate cause, of all the changes that occur in the material or spiritual world.* For in assuming this principle, do I not assume the fact that God is the cause, and the immediate cause, of all that is done, whether in heaven or in earth, whether among things visible or invisible? But if God is the cause, and the efficient and proximate cause, then neither matter nor mind is the cause. I mean created mind. Matter can do nothing, because what it seems to do, is done by the efficiency of the Deity, and its apparent agency is but the agency of the Deity. Created mind can do nothing, for the same reason; because what it seems to do, is done by the immediate agency of God, and all its seeming qualities and agencies are but the exercise of the Divine power. There is no retreat from this conclusion, but by allowing a *created efficiency*, which is incompatible with the doctrine of God's universal and immediate agency. What then becomes of matter and of mind? Their properties, so far as they are *efficient*, are nothing but God's agency; and inefficient properties, we know, are no properties at all. If God's agency, therefore, is not creature agency, there is no *creature agency*, nor creature itself in the universe, unless a creature can be found without properties, qualities or powers.

We may have reasoned *erroneously*, my young brethren, but we have endeavored to reason *fairly*; and if we are not mistaken in our results, it will be found that there is no other alternative *but to admit, that created substances are possessed of properties and powers, which are inseparable from their very being*; or that, in truth, *there are no created substances*; and if *no created substances*, no creation—and consequently that the whole system of things, if things they can be called, is only *God in operation*, or *God in exercise*. Was the late President of Yale College, then, *wrong*, or was he *right*, when he suggested that a certain



portion of the Theology of this country was verging insensibly, though decidedly, towards *Pantheism*? I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider such to be fact, though it is *fact* of which the divines concerned are by no means aware.

The source of the evil seems to be, if an evil it is to be called, a desire to go below the bottom of things, and not to stop where God and nature have raised an insurmountable barrier. We are possessed of very limited capacities, and must have some *ultimate facts*. To ascertain *these* is an article of importance everywhere; but on no subject is it more imperatively demanded, than when we treat of God, and of his works, whether of creation or of providence.

The work of Creation, we have previously remarked, is a great mystery; and a mystery, I will venture to say, which in this world we shall never be able to solve. Our wisest course is to admit the *fact*, that there is a *creation*, both of things visible and invisible, and to consider *well* what this fact implies. We must take creatures as we find them, and judge of their nature or constitution by the qualities and powers which they exhibit; and let no abstract reasonings concerning their dependence on God, or their connection with God, drive us from those first principles common to all our minds; principles which lead us almost in spite of ourselves to regard every creature, be it *material* or *immaterial*, as having a distinct and separate existence from the Deity, possessing properties or qualities strictly its own, and acting in its own little sphere with no less certainty from the powers it possesses, or from the constitution of its being, than the great Author of nature from whom its being was derived.

There are some objections to the views which we have taken, which I would willingly notice, had I not

already trespassed upon your patience. Let me, however, say one word to an objection which is much relied upon by those who do not coincide with the foregoing statements.

It is asked, if creatures act from the intrinsic powers of their own being, or from the constitution of their being, if this does not render them virtually *independent* of God? The argument is, if creatures may act without the immediate agency of God in them, and upon them; causing them to act, what control has God over them? How do we know that they they will not get away from God, or, at least, counteract his will? Our answer is, that in giving creatures their existence, God gave them such a constitution, and surrounded them with such influences, as necessarily to secure that course of action, or that precise development of their powers in every instance, as his infinite wisdom and goodness had predetermined. His *decretive will*, therefore, in regard to them will most certainly be executed, and with no more difficulty on this supposition than on any other.

But this, perhaps, will not satisfy. It may still be said that they *act independently*, though they fulfill the pleasure of God. I reply, what if it were so? What harm is there done? Is the universe less perfect on this supposition than on any other? or, are its results less certain or less glorious? But I inquire, what is meant by a creature's acting *independently*? Words are of little importance, unless they are used with some definite meaning. Is it meant that the creature acts without God's acting immediately upon it, to make it act? Then I admit *that the fact is so*, and call upon my opponents for proof that it is otherwise. But if it is meant that the creature is not every moment in the hands of God, to be disposed of as he pleases, whether by continuing him in being, as he is, or by modifying or destroying that

being, then I deny that the creature is thus *independent*; for, in all these respects, he is absolutely subject to the will of his Sovereign. Or, *if by the creature's acting independently be meant that his actions are not subject to the Divine control*, so that they shall be directed or modified as God pleases, this also I deny. Because, without interfering at all with the creature's powers of action, it is perfectly easy for the Divine Being to bring him under such influences from within and without, as shall shape his course in the manner and to the end which the Divine Wisdom has appointed.

But let *me* here put a question: we hear a great deal about God's *controlling* the actions of his creatures; now I want to know what sense there is in this language, if creatures have no actions or agencies to control? Is it the same thing to *control* an action as to *create* an action? I have not so learned English, although I am still willing to learn. When I control the actions of another, I always suppose that other capable of action, and that the influence which I exert presupposes it, and is employed in modifying the action thus controlled, either in directing to the object, or in some way bounding or limiting its influence. And I see no reason why the language should not have a like import when applied to God. When it is said of him, that the wrath of man shall praise him, and that the remainder of wrath he will *restrain*, it does not look much like his immediately creating that wrath; unless to *restrain* a thing is the same as to give being to a thing.

I close this discussion with the following remarks:

*First.* That we should not be hasty in our decisions on a subject which it must be admitted is *very subtle*, and attended with many difficulties, and where men of the most powerful intellect have not been agreed. And *Second.* That we must *bear* with those who differ from

us, and allow each one the full right of examining and judging for himself; that we should do this not only with all the meekness and tenderness of Christians, but with all the candor and liberality of philosophers—whose common aim should be to encourage investigation and to advance the cause of truth.



## LECTURE VI.

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### ON SECOND CAUSES.

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#### ARE SECOND CAUSES EFFICIENT CAUSES?

By second causes, in this question, are intended causes which owe their existence, and consequently their powers, to the *Great First Cause*. Whatever be their nature or their influence, they derive all from God, and cannot act but in subordination to his will. In this sense, all created existences are second causes, so far as their agency is concerned in the changes which take place either in the material or spiritual world. Whether they are *really* and *truly efficient*, effecting what they seem to effect, is the question. Two opinions on this subject have prevailed. Antecedently to the days of Descartes, Bishop Stillingfleet remarks, there was but one. Till then, all the world believed, whether philosophers or vulgar, what the great mass have done since—that second causes were efficient causes, the real producers of the changes found in constant conjunction with them. Nor can it be doubted that this statement is substantially correct, since the same fact is admitted by Professor Stewart and others. We know it was the opinion of Aristotle and of Cicero, among the ancients—of Bacon, Locke, Newton, Boyle, among the moderns. Even Descartes himself did not in the main depart from this long-

received doctrine, though in some of his speculations he laid the foundation for a new theory. As he could not conceive how matter could act upon mind, nor created mind upon matter, he asserted, "that all motion comes immediately from God, and that it is a mode in matter, but not in God." According to Stillingfleet, he was afraid to speak out, lest he should make God the soul of the world. But not so his followers. Malebranche, and others of the same school, eagerly seizing upon this hint, presently carried their doctrine so far as to affirm that second causes have no efficiency in the production of sensation, and of course none in the changes which occur in the physical objects around us. They contended that God was the efficient cause in both cases, and, in short, the only efficient cause in the universe.

This doctrine soon became prevalent throughout Europe, and, with some modification, makes a part of the metaphysical systems of Clarke, Butler and Berkeley. It is a prominent feature in the speculations of Reid, Stewart and Beattie, though the first often seems to contradict himself upon this article—a circumstance the more remarkable, as he evidently made this subject a matter of much study and reflection. Professor Stewart has noticed this inconsistency, and Professor Beazely has animadverted upon it in terms of unmeasured severity. "The chain of natural causes," Dr. Reid observes, "has not unfitly been compared to a chain hanging down from heaven: a link that is discovered supports the link below it, but it must *itself* be supported, and that which *supports* it must be supported, until we come to the First Link, which is supported by the throne of the Almighty." And the general doctrine which this comparison illustrates, if it illustrate anything, is expressed in the following sentence: "Every natural cause must have a cause, until we ascend to the First Cause, which is uncaused, and which operates not by necessity, but by

will." Here the efficiency of natural causes seems to be distinctly recognized, and the writer talks like Lord Verulam, or one of the philosophers of olden time. Were he, indeed, the advocate of the intrinsic power of second causes, I know not how he could have expressed himself with more clearness and precision. We give this statement not so much to show the inconsistency of the writer, as *how ready* men are to relapse into plain common sense notions, in spite of their philosophy, whenever their philosophy departs from the unbiased voice of nature. . The most wakeful caution is, seldom sufficient to protect a man against relapses of this sort. It is not to be doubted, however, that Dr. Reid, notwithstanding these occasional aberrations from his system, was a strenuous advocate for the new theory, namely, *That second causes have no power*, but are to be regarded as the mere antecedents or signs of change, the efficiency never being in them, but in the immediate agency of God. The only exception which he or Professor Stewart makes to this sweeping universality, is in the case of *voluntary action*, where they suppose the mind acts as the immediate and direct efficient, both in the production of volition and in those mental and bodily changes which instantly follow it. Here, they say, *man is an efficient cause*. In every other case, throughout the physical and moral world, *God is the sole efficient*. . Do you ask for the proof of man's efficiency in voluntary action? They answer, our own consciousness; by which they mean that such is our mental constitution, that every man is irresistibly led to refer his voluntary actions to his own inherent powers, and to regard himself as the only true and proper efficient in the case.

But here Dr. Reid demurs, not being quite certain of this. We are certain only, he says, of our volition, and the consequent bodily or mental change; we are not certain that our volition was the *efficient* cause of that

change: it may have resulted from the immediate agency of God.

He would probably limit his doctrine of *creature efficiency* to the single fact of *volition*, and contend that here, and here only, have we evidence that man is truly an agent, or an efficient cause. But why this solitary exception? The theory would certainly be more simple, and perhaps more plausible, without it. Why not go the whole length with Malebranche, and others of that school, and say that "*God is the immediate producer of all change, of all absolutely* ; and every event in the universe is at once accounted for, and accounted for on one and the same principle? But neither Reid nor Stewart will for a moment consent to this, because they perceive that such a doctrine would instantly sweep away every vestige of *created power*—that is, active power—and with it, according to their principles, all our notions of *moral responsibility*. They did well, therefore, to pause at a point which, according to them, threatened to overturn the foundations of virtue, and to set men loose from those ties which bind them as moral beings to one another, and to the throne of their Creator.

But a question here may well be asked, on the score of consistency, can these writers deny the efficiency of second causes in the *physical* world, and maintain it in the moral? What are the facts in the case? Why, in both worlds, we perceive a train of antecedents and consequents, a train alike uniform and invariable, and we directly perceive nothing more. But because we cannot persuade ourselves that this uniformity and invariableness take place without any ground or reason, we recognize in every change a *cause*, and the *fact* of its operation, though we remain profoundly ignorant of the *modus*. Nothing is seen by us in either train, but the phenomena, and the order in which they arise; and though we always connect with them two things which



we cannot see, viz., a subject of the phenomena and power to produce them, yet these are *matters of inference*, not of direct observation. But we see just as much, and infer just as much, in relation to one class of phenomena as the other.

Let it be farther remarked, that there is in the human mind a sort of constitutional propensity to refer every change to its immediate and invariable antecedent as its cause, and to do this as readily and with as much confidence in changes which take place in the physical as in the moral world, while this reference always carries with it a belief of some fitness or adaptation in the antecedent to be the cause. We may not know what this fitness or adaptation is, but we can never believe the result to be *arbitrary*; for why this result rather than another? and why any result rather than none at all? From the very constitution of our minds, we are compelled to believe that there was some ground or reason for the change, and for the change being as it is rather than otherwise. On this principle alone is it, that we always expect the same result, where all the previous circumstances are the same. Now, if I regard the antecedent as *powerless*, in a train of *physical* changes, what reason can I assign for its not being equally powerless in a train which is *moral*? Or, if I allow power or causality in the antecedent to changes which occur in mind, why not allow it in the antecedent to changes which occur in matter? or which is the same thing, if the mental or moral antecedent be an efficient cause, why should not the material or physical antecedent be so likewise, since, to our observation, there is no difference in the facts and circumstances of the two? In both trains, physical and moral, there is the same uniformity and invariableness of sequence, the same belief of causation attendant on every change, and the same natural or constitutional propensity to refer to the known or sup-

posed antecedent, as the efficient *cause* of the change. And besides, if the regular antecedent, in both cases, be not that cause, we are entirely ignorant of what is.

But it may be said that matter and mind are widely different substances, possessed of entirely different qualities, and therefore, that we cannot argue from one to the other touching the question of their efficiency. Why not, we ask, when the question is concerning power, or the real producer of change? We know nothing either of *matter* or of *mind*, but by its qualities; and we judge of both, only by the changes which they seem to produce or undergo; and if no change was produced, or suffered by them, we should not know that they had any qualities, or were possessed of being. To know the *powers* of matter, therefore (using the term in its active sense), is simply to know what changes it produces, or is fitted to produce; and to know the *powers* of mind, or whether it has any power, is to know the changes it causes or effects. If it cause no change, it has no power; and the same is true of matter, and for the same reason, viz., that to *have power*, and to be the *producer of change*, is only one and the same thing. Matter and mind, then, for aught that appears, are justly comparable in this particular; for if power belong to them at all, it must necessarily be indicated by the changes or effects which they severally produce. This, indeed, narrows the ground of comparison, but shows at the same time, the propriety of making it, and settles, we should think, the question whether they have an equal claim to power. For what is the language of *fact* with respect to the actual efficiency of these substances? Is it true that matter and mind severally produce change? matter acting upon matter, and mind upon mind, and both mutually affecting each other? They certainly appear so to do; and so far as observation is concerned, they furnish precisely the same reason to believe in the efficiency of the one, as in the

efficiency of the other. We believe in the efficiency of *mind*, because, to our apprehension, one mind often affects another, while it produces changes in itself, and in that corporeal system with which it is mysteriously united. When I convince my friend of an error, or persuade him to a right action, I exert an influence which entitles me to consider myself as a *cause*, in relation to the change produced in his mind; not immediately, indeed, but through the instrumentalities I employ. But the same general action develops a process in my own mind, connected with a change in my bodily powers. I did not attempt to convince or persuade my friend, till I had formed the purpose of so doing; this purpose was a voluntary act, or determination of the mind, and the result of consideration, or some previous state, in which motives were brought to bear upon my voluntary powers; and this purpose or volition was more immediately or remotely the cause of some corresponding change in the organs employed in expressing my thoughts. Here, then, is mind producing a change in itself, or more properly, one state of mind producing another state of mind, while the latter causes a change in the organic system, or bodily powers.

True, it may be said, but here is a *voluntary act*, which the mind is conscious of performing by its own inherent powers. Be it so. But was not this act performed in the view of motive, and under its exciting and commanding influence? Could it have taken place without motive, and independent of motive? All experience will say, *No*. At the same time, we cheerfully concede that both mind and motive were essential to *volition*, and jointly constituted its immediate and invariable antecedent, or its true and proper cause. Motive alone, if we could conceive its existence possible, would have been *unavailing* without mind to perceive it, and to be susceptible of its influence; and mind alone would have been

equally unavailing, as to volition, if there had not been a motive perceived, which was adapted to the susceptibility of the mind; and if the mind also had not possessed the capacity of voluntary exertion. Taken together, these things formed the previous requisites to volition, and so far as we can perceive, the only requisites. Thus it is universally; wherever these requisites exist, volition is the certain consequence. They are its efficient, and never-failing cause. Still we contend that their efficiency is not more evident than the efficiency of material objects around us.

It is not more certain that the things we have named are the cause of volition, than that fire is the cause of the sensation of heat—light the cause of vision, or impulse the cause of motion. We ground this assertion upon the fact that these physical objects are, to our apprehension, as truly the producers of change in the cases specified, as any antecedent or previous requisites can be, in the case of volition; and hence it is, that until the mind is perverted by the reasonings of a dubious philosophy, no question is ever made as to the efficiency of natural causes in the *material* world, more than in the *spiritual*.

The unbiased voice of reason, is to allow causality in the regular and proximate antecedent of any change, or in what is supposed to be the antecedent;\* nor does it make any difference, whether the antecedent be found in matter, or in mind. If it be found in matter, I take the testimony of my senses in the case; if it be found in mind, I take the testimony of consciousness; and to both I am compelled by my constitution to yield an implicit faith. I can no more doubt when I thrust my hand into the fire, that it is the fire which burns me, than I can doubt the reality of my suffering, or the con-

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\* See note A, at the end of Lecture 6.

sequent will or desire to withdraw my hand ; for why do I will to withdraw it, but because I believe my sufferings to be produced by the fire ? I see a piece of wax placed in the flame of a lighted candle. The wax melts. Can I doubt what melts it ? Is not my conviction as intuitive, and as unalterable, that this change was produced by the flame, as that my sensation of heat was caused by the fire ? You present me with a rose ; I perceive its variegated colors, and am regaled with its fragrance. Here are two perceptions—one by the eye, one by the organ of smelling. What do I believe with respect to the rose ? Certainly that it is something without, and that it affects my organs of vision and smelling ; or, which is the same thing, that it is the cause of two sensations, the sensation of color and of fragrance. This is what I believe, and cannot help but believe ; and this belief I truly express, when I say *I see the rose—I perceive its fragrance*. For in the very fact of perception, I am carried to the belief of something without, and something as the cause of my perception. This fact will be noticed more particularly hereafter, and I advert to it now, not so much to show that matter has efficiency no less truly than mind, but that the testimony of sense is as much to be regarded in this question, as the testimony of consciousness. The truth is, that the voice of both is imperative, and that whatever may be the principles of our philosophy, we cannot refuse our assent to either. In the very language we employ, and in the whole conduct of life, we give abundant evidence of the reality and power of our belief. It is to no purpose, therefore, to allege, that mind is efficient rather than matter, because I am *conscious* of its agency ; and from my *consciousness* am compelled to believe it an efficient cause ; for, with equal truth, it may be said that I *perceive* the efficiency of matter, and from my *perception* am compelled to believe in its power or causality. *Percep*

tion and *consciousness* are different witnesses, but according to an established law of our nature, they are regarded by us in their respective spheres, as equally *competent* and equally credible.

Are we not entitled then to say, that a system of philosophy which maintains the efficiency of second causes in the moral world, and denies it in the physical, is inconsistent with itself—since what it affirms has no greater evidence of truth than what it denies? We are much deceived as to the facts in the case, or an impartial examination will compel us to adopt one of these propositions, either *that second causes have power in both worlds, physical and moral*, or *that they have power in neither*. The latter proposition was embraced by Malebranche, and great was his labor to free it from *objection*—but, as most men believe, with very little success. The subject, however, is still open to investigation, and we inquire, what is truth in relation to it? Is God, as this philosopher supposed, the only efficient cause in the universe, producing by his immediate agency all the changes we see? or have second causes power to produce effects by an efficiency properly their own—imparted to them, indeed, by their almighty Creator, but lodged in their very constitution, or in the fact of their existence? A ball is seen to move at the very instant it receives a stroke from my hand. The inquiry is, what moved the ball? Was it the stroke which I gave it? or did its motion come immediately from God? If I advocate the efficiency of second causes, I must make the former supposition. If I deny their efficiency, I must take the latter, unless, with certain mystical philosophers, I attempt to split the difference, and maintain that the motion of the ball was produced neither by the stroke separately, nor yet by the immediate agency of God, but by an efficiency mysteriously compounded of the two. At some future time, we may perhaps take occasion to examine

this last-mentioned theory, which includes among its advocates men distinguished for their talents and their virtues. At present we confine our remarks to the question : Whether God be the only *efficient* in the universe ? or whether second causes have power ? This I take to be the true and proper alternative in the case.

*First.* If second causes have no power, that is, if they are not causes *per se*, producing effects by their own inherent energy, as truly as any cause can be supposed to do, why have they gone so long under the *name* of *causes* ? Is it that mankind have supposed them to be the regular but powerless antecedents of change ? the mere occasions for some hidden but mighty power to operate ? Rather is it not certain that from the beginning of the world they have been regarded as *truly efficient* in the changes with which they are regularly connected ? This is a matter of historical record, as our opponents will admit. But we need no other proof of it, than the very structure of language. Men give names as the signs, or symbols, of their thoughts ; and hence their mode of thinking cannot fail to appear from the language they employ. We pretend not to doubt that men have always believed in the relation of cause and effect, inasmuch as we find in every language under heaven, many words expressive of this relation. Nor do we question for a moment their firm belief in an external world, since this belief is constantly indicated in the words they employ. By the same mode of reasoning we become assured that the early and steady opinion of mankind has been, that *second causes* are *efficient*, because this notion is involved in the very first principles of language, and involved as extensively as the fact of causation itself. You cannot open a page in any book, ancient or modern, without perceiving this truth written as with a sunbeam. Our opponents must concede to us, that that would be a strange kind of language, in which

should be found no such words as *cause*, *effect*, *produce*, *occasion*, *create*, *destroy*, nor any kindred terms, which, like all active verbs, are expressive of an *action*, and of course of an *agent*, whose action it is. They cannot but perceive that such a language would be impossible upon the acknowledged principles and laws of human thought. But we ask, if it is not equally inconceivable, and equally impossible, to frame a language which should recognize only one cause or agent in the universe? The very attempt would run so counter to the usual habits of thinking and speaking, as to subject a man to the most pointed ridicule. He would instantly become a barbarian to others, if others were not barbarians to him. From this cause it is, that those who have professed to deny an external world, have been obliged to *talk* and *write* like other men. They could not otherwise have made themselves understood, nor avoided the sneer which a language conformable to their avowed opinions would have occasioned. The same is true of those who, like David Hume, deny any such thing as *cause* and *effect*, in the common and appropriate sense of these terms. They are obliged to *talk* and to *act* like other men—that is, just as if they believed what others believe, that *cause* and *effect* mark a relation not of priority and subsequence only, but of productive power or efficiency. Let them shape their language to their philosophy, and they could not make out a single page intelligible to themselves or to others. Nor is the case at all different with those who deny the *efficiency* of second causes; they are obliged to use a language, and to pursue a course, which is every moment at war with their hypothesis. They must speak of themselves, and of others, as *agents*, and not as *mere events* or *effects*—of the changes which occur in the physical and moral world, as *produced* by their *appropriate causes*, that is, by their regular antecedents, which by common consent are regarded as the real *producers* of



change ; and which they themselves must so regard, in their language at least, or become both unintelligible and ridiculous.

Does this afford no presumption that second causes have power ? Why the impression, so *early*, so *deep*, so *universal*, so *hard to be eradicated*, and returning at every moment with all its force, even in those who have professed theoretically to cast it off ? That it is an impression of this character is most evident, from the influence it has had in modifying every language in the known world, and from the *difficulty*, may I not say from the *impossibility*, of framing a language upon any other principles. But at this very point we may be told that this deep-rooted and common belief is of no weight in the argument—that there are many such beliefs and impressions which every scientific man will admit to be unfounded—and yet their influence in the structure of language cannot be denied. The vulgar have no correct opinions of the figure and motion of the earth, nor of the magnitude and distance of the sun, nor of many other physical facts, the nature of which they judge of from the report of their senses. If they may be deceived in these cases, why not in others ? Who knows but their belief of cause and effect, and of the influence of second causes in particular, may not be as illusory as their belief of the figure of the earth, or the size and distance of the sun ?

Our answer is this: the light of science has detected an error in the one case, but is not able to do it in the other. You may prove to a man by unanswerable arguments, that the earth is not a plane, as he has supposed, and that the sun is a much greater body, and at a distance vastly more remote, than he ever imagined : but can you prove to him that fire does not fuse iron, nor water melt salt ? that light is not the cause of vision to

the healthful eye ? nor wringing a man's nose the cause of its spouting blood ?

Besides, when the vulgar are deceived in the cases above mentioned, what is it that deceives them ? Is it believing the report of their senses ? and are they undeceived at last by rejecting that report ? Nothing can be wider from the fact. Their senses have not reported falsely, nor have they fallen into error by receiving that report, and receiving it with the most unqualified confidence—a thing, by the way, which no man can help. Their error originated in an entirely different source—in the inferences they drew from the natural appearances of objects. These appearances were correctly reported, so far as the senses simply were concerned ; or rather these appearances are nothing different from the report of sense, and are, in all cases doubtless, the same to the philosopher and to the peasant. The *aspect* of the sun, for instance, is not different to the eye of the one, from what it is to the eye of the other, but the difference lies in their individual and separate conclusions. And wherefore this difference ? Not because the philosopher questions the testimony of sense, for that he cannot do ; but because he compares this testimony in different cases and circumstances, and comes to a conclusion which the comparison, in his judgment, authorizes.\* He believes in natural appearances as much as the vulgar, and his sensitive impressions are in no respect different from theirs. Were it not thus, he would have no means of detecting erroneous conclusions concerning outward objects, whether made by himself or by others. This is too obvious to require farther elucidation, and therefore we remark that it is not difficult to distinguish between what are sometimes called *illusions of the senses*, or more properly, *incorrect inferences from the testimony of sense*, and those *common-sense notions*, or *primary beliefs*, which no man can shake

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\* Beattie on Truth. Part I.

off, if he would. The former admit of correction, from new observation, or from careful comparison of various observations, whether in relation to the same or different objects. The latter remain firm and unalterable, whatever pains may be taken to annihilate or modify them. Place their objects in what light you will, raise your doubts, and bring forth your strong reasons, still nature is true to her purpose, and these instinctive principles maintain their ground. Now, what we contend is, that a belief in the efficiency of second causes is one of these principles. It is *early, deep, universal, and incapable of being eradicated*—just as *really and truly* as the belief of causation, and of an external world. Men can be found, indeed, who deny them all; but do they not contradict the voice of nature, if that voice can be learned from the sentiments of mankind in all ages and nations? Nay, do they not contradict the inward convictions of their own minds, if their actions can be taken as a true index of their convictions?

That fire fuses metals, and water melts salt, are facts, we have said, which no man can disprove; but are we not entitled to say, that they are facts which every man, from the very constitution of his mind, is compelled to believe? Can he any more doubt, that it is a quality of fire to fuse metals, and of water to melt salt, than he can doubt the existence of the substances of which these qualities are predicated? But Berkeley, it may be said, doubted both; he believed in no material substances or qualities, nor in anything which may be denominated an external world. True, such was his theory; but what was his practice? Did he act upon his own principles? His philosophy said there was no external world; that what we call *sensible things* are merely our own sensations, produced by no external object, but by the immediate agency of God. But did he believe this when he attempted to argue with his fellow-men, whom he must

have considered as existing without, while yet he had no greater evidence of their existence than of other physical objects around him, and no evidence at all, but upon the testimony of sense.

Into a like inconsistency do they fall, who deny the *efficiency* of second causes; for, while they profess to regard them as powerless, they act towards them every moment as if they believed them possessed of an inherent and unremitting energy.

The whole of the preceding argument goes upon the principle that the efficiency of second causes is a common-sense notion, deeply engraven upon the human mind, and showing itself in the very structure of language, not only in modifying some of its less essential forms, but in giving birth to first principles, and shaping the very groundwork. Nor can we readily be persuaded that a sentiment at once so *radical* and *universal* can be accounted for, but by supposing it a dictate of nature, the result of that reason and common understanding which God has bestowed upon mankind.

[NOTE A.] The sentiment advanced in this place, and in other parts of the Lecture is, that whatever is regarded as the *regular* antecedent of any change, is instantly recognized by the mind as the *efficient cause* of the change; and that this is the unbiased voice of reason, or the dictate of common sense, from which there lies no appeal. If this statement be correct, it cannot fail to be perceived, that the *efficiency* of *second causes* is placed on as firm a basis as the doctrine of cause and effect, or the fact of an external world. To *this* statement, however, it has been objected that the *supposed* antecedent is not always the *real* antecedent; of course, that the mind is sometimes mistaken in its reference, regarding that as the *proximate* cause which, in fact, is not *that* cause. Will not this abate our confidence in the argument for the efficiency of *second causes*, drawn from the common and prevailing sentiment, that the known or supposed antecedent is truly an efficient cause? If the mind may mistake in its reference in one case, why not in another? if it does not intuitively and universally detect the true *efficient* in the case, how can we be sure that its dictates are not wholly fallacious?

Our reply is, that though the mind may mistake as to the *proximate* cause of a change, it does not thence follow, that it mistakes as to the *efficiency* of the cause to which the change is referred. The mistake lies in the *proximity* of the cause to the effect, not in the productive power of the cause, to which the effect is attributed. The common opinion is, that fire fuses metals, and water melts salt; but suppose it was ascertained that these substances produce their respective results through

the intervention of a medium or principle not heretofore discovered? Their powers would not be less *real*, but their agency would be less *immediate* than is now generally supposed.

Or take another example. Every man believes that his will is concerned as a cause in the free and unconstrained motion of his hand. He considers the muscles of this organ as obedient to his will, and subjected to his control. Nor is his belief, as to the *efficiency* of his will, in any measure altered, when he learns that the affection of the nerves connected with the organ constitutes another link in the chain. According to his first impression, his volition was the immediate antecedent to the contraction of the muscles which give motion to the hand. Now he finds the *affection* of the nerves as prior to that *contraction*, and necessary to its occurrence. But though the train is lengthened, the causes concerned are not less efficient, nor does he ascribe less power to his will.



## LECTURE VII.

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### ON SECOND CAUSES.

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#### ARE SECOND CAUSES EFFICIENT CAUSES ?

In the preceding Lecture, we adverted to the different answers which had been given to this question; and stated that before the time of Descartes, all mankind, both learned and unlearned, believed second causes to be efficient, producing the changes which they seem to produce—that since that period, many philosophers have professed to regard them as *powerless*, and the mere antecedents or signs of change.

We examined, at some length, the opinion of Dr. Reid and Professor Stewart, who maintain the *efficiency* of second causes in the *moral*, but deny it in the *physical* world. We attempted to show that their doctrine was unsupported by facts, and incompatible with itself; and that, to be *consistent* on this subject, we must adopt one of two propositions, either that second causes have power in both worlds, or in *neither* world; or, which comes to the same thing, either that God is the only efficient cause in the universe—producing by his immediate agency all the changes we see—or that second causes have power, and as truly in matter as in mind.

We adopted the latter proposition, and alleged in favor of it the well-known fact that mankind, from the

earliest records of time, have steadily acted under the full conviction of its truth. The very structure of language, aside from historical testimony, we considered as an unanswerable proof of such conviction. In short, that so deep and radical is this sentiment—so completely wrought in the very first principles of language—that no man can make himself understood without employing terms which fully involve it. From this important fact we deduced the inference, that *the efficiency of second causes* has a strong claim to be considered a *common sense notion*, not unlike the general notion of cause and effect, or the belief of an external world.

*Second.* We remark now, that it seems difficult to conceive how men should ever arrive at the notion of cause and effect as an abstract relation, or at the belief of anything without them, or besides them, unless they went upon the principle that second causes have power. For if these notions are not born with them, nor communicated by special revelation, (neither of which will be pretended,) they must be acquired in the exercise of the mental faculties, either *with* or *without* the aid of the bodily powers. So far as I know, it is an admitted fact that the notion of a cause first arises in the mind on observing some change, and remarking the circumstances in which this change has occurred.

That we require the idea of *antecedent* and *consequent* in this way, and of the more general relation of *regular* antecedence and of *regular* consequence, seems to admit of no doubt. Nor will it be questioned, I suppose, that the idea of particular antecedence is obtained before the idea of general or uniform antecedence. Why should not all this be true, with respect to cause and effect? Can it be believed that *men* have the *abstract* notion of *cause*, and that no effect can take place without a cause, before they have learned what a cause is, through the medium of some change in a particular case? or, which

amounts to the same thing, before some change, and the circumstances in which it occurs, have suggested to them the idea of a cause, and of a particular cause? Do we go from *particulars* to *generals*, or from *generals* to *particulars*? We can be at no loss which is the more natural of our thoughts.

Let us suppose a newly born infant whose first sensation is some bodily pain. Does he ascribe this pain to a cause? There is not the remotest ground to believe that he has the least idea of cause. He knows not, perhaps, that he has a body, or that anything besides himself exists; and some might even doubt if he had reflection enough to carry him to the knowledge of his own being. Be this as it may; as his faculties develope and he becomes capable of observing the changes within and without him, and at the same time of remarking the circumstances in which they arise, it is easy to see how he may acquire the notion of a cause. He puts his hand into the flame of a candle, and instantly experiences a painful sensation. If not at first, after a few trials he learns the cause of his sufferings, and cannot be induced to repeat the experiment. I say he *learns* the cause of his sufferings, by learning from the circumstances of the case that they were produced by the flame of the candle. But is not this saying too much? Perhaps it is only the *occasion* of his sufferings that he learns. He perceives nothing more, it may be said, and he infers nothing more than the simple conjunction of two events—*his contact* with the candle, and *his sensation of pain*. Then it is certain he has not yet arrived at the knowledge or conception of a cause, nor is it easy to see how he ever can. He perceives a connection in time and place between two events; but if he does not perceive nor infer a causal connection, he must regard the one as the mere antecedent or sign of the other, and has no idea of *causality* in the case. Is it not, however, demonstrably



certain that the little reasoner carries his thoughts much farther? He verily believes the candle to be the *cause* of his sufferings, and therefore ascribes to it, in his imagination at least, *qualities* which correspond to this belief. If it were not so, how could he learn the *qualities* of the candle? or why should he ever suspect it to have any qualities? The fact of his belief we take to be unquestionable; and the amount of it is, that his sufferings were produced by the flame of the candle, and that they will return if he apply his hand as before. Now what is this but bringing him to the knowledge of a cause, and of a *particular* cause?—from which, in similar circumstances, he is led to expect a similar result.

Will you say that he is mistaken in his reference, and that the true cause is not discovered by him? Whether it be so or not, he has acquired the notion of a cause, and in the present case is fixed in his belief what the cause is, and regulates his conduct accordingly.

In a manner correspondent with this, there is reason to believe that all men acquire the notion of a cause. They are led to this conception by observing some change in themselves, or in the objects around them, and by noticing the circumstances in which this change has occurred. That it *did not* occur in other circumstances, and *did* occur in these, suggests the idea of their influence or agency in the case. To these, therefore, the mind refers as the immediate antecedent and cause of the change. But why this reference, it may be said, unless some general notion of a cause had been previously obtained? I answer, this reference is nothing but an act of induction, or inferential reasoning, from the facts in the case; it is the judgment which the mind forms in view of all the circumstances, and is neither more nor less than a dictate of common sense. A cause is that which *does something*. Is it strange that this notion should arise in the mind, when something is seen to be

done? Far more strange, would it be, if this were not the fact, since even the brute creation acquire the notion of a cause in similar circumstances. We speak not without reflection. It is an admitted fact, that brutes never rise to abstract conceptions, or conclusions at all; or if they do this, it is only in the very humblest degree. But that they have the notion of *particular* causes, and that this notion is acquired by experience and observation, is just as certain, as that the *cur* trembles before the uplifted lash, which has just been buried in his skin, or that he often turns upon the man who inflicts an injury upon himself or his master. To say that it is only the *occasion*, and not the cause of their sufferings, that animals learn by their experience, is not only to beg the question in debate, but is utterly irreconcilable with the clear indications which they give, both of their gratitude and their resentment.

Shall we allow experience and observation, then, to teach the *animal* what neither the one nor the other can ever teach *man*, the *notion of a cause*. That the *one*, in the exercise of his humble faculties, acquires a knowledge, which the other, with his superior endowments, can never acquire, unless by a teaching which is prior to experience, and altogether transcends it? True philosophy can never be driven to such shifts.

Assuming, therefore, what we consider in no degree doubtful, that men acquire the notion of a cause through the medium of some observed change, in the manner above stated, and we derive an argument in favor of the fact, that the efficiency of second causes is a common-sense notion, deeply seated in the mind of man. How can it be otherwise, if the very notion of a cause is acquired in view of some change? and if this *notion*, when it first arises in the mind, is always connected with some particular cause, to which the mind refers as the immediate antecedent, and the real producer of the

change? For what is this antecedent, this particular cause, but something which we denominate a secondary cause? and what the *reference* which the mind makes to it, but a *belief* of its efficiency? To say that this reference is an error, and always an error, (and the objection would be nothing without this,) is to say, that from the constitution of our minds we are under the necessity of believing a falsehood, as the only means of coming at the truth—that is, we must believe in the efficiency of some particular cause, or we should never get the notion of a cause, nor rise to the abstract conception, that no effect can take place without a cause. We cannot pursue this subject, or it might, as we think, easily be made to appear, that as the idea of *causation* is introduced into the mind by the agency of some secondary cause, so without that agency, and the fact of its belief, the mind would never acquire the idea of any cause, supreme or subordinate, unless imparted by special revelation.

To suppose, as some have done, that anterior to all experience and observation, the mind is somehow possessed of the notion of cause and effect, as a *general* and *abstract relation*, is, in our judgment, beginning at the wrong end, as it supposes *knowledge* in a given case—*general* and *abstract knowledge*, previous to the appropriate exercise of our faculties, and independent of that exercise. That is to say, it supposes general and abstract notions, on a subject where the mind has never generalized or exercised its powers of abstraction at all. All analogy, surely, goes against this. But if it did not, and we were compelled to admit that, prior to experience, we possess the abstract notion of cause and effect, and that no effect can take place without a cause; still it is manifest that our knowledge of particular causes, and our belief of their efficiency in any given circumstances, is exclusively the result of experience and observation. This Dr. Brown has shown in the most unanswerable manner, at the

same time that he has demonstrated, that without the *knowledge* and *belief* of *particular* causes, in the physical changes *within* and *around* us, we could never rise to the knowledge of the Great First Cause, on which all other causes depend.

That this First Cause is only one among many which may be supposed, is most certain ; and that men are not born with the knowledge and belief of it is equally certain ; for the deaf and dumb have no such knowledge and belief, even after their faculties have come to maturity. If men come to the knowledge of God, then, it must be in one of two ways—either by a process of inductive reasoning, or by special revelation. If by the former, they must go from *effect* to *cause*, and that by steps more or less numerous, till they arrive at a primary Cause, the source of all other causes. But how shall this process begin, if among the many antecedents to the many changes they witness, they recognize no particular cause ? Will it be said that the mind naturally passes at once from some change it has observed to the Great First Cause, as the immediate Author and Producer of it ? or, after searching in vain for an adequate cause, ultimately fastens on him ? This would be a surprising leap for the human faculties, and utterly incredible if there were no proofs against it ; but the case of the deaf and dumb just alluded to, settles the question, in our apprehension, that no such thing is done, or can be done, by the human mind ; nay, farther, that this is a point never reached by an insulated mind, whatever may be the strength of its faculties, or whatever its belief with respect to the *efficiency* of second causes. The only probable, and as we think, the only possible method of coming to the knowledge of God, by a process of reasoning, is by allowing *second causes* to have power, and to be the real producers of changes which they apparently produce. This settles, on a firm

basis, the fact of causation, and enables the mind to proceed, on the principle of induction, from cause to cause, through a series of causes, severally the effect of some antecedent one, till it reaches a cause which is *underived*, *independent* and *eternal*. Or if the argument for the Divine existence turn upon *design*, manifested in the physical objects around us, how is this design to be shown, but by showing that these objects display a *fitness* or *adaptation* of means to an end? But can there be a *fitness* or *adaptation* of means, where there is no *tendency*? or any *tendency* where there is no *power*?

If second causes *do* nothing they are *fitted* to do nothing; a denial of their power is a denial of their fitness; and where there is no *fitness*, but all is *arbitrary*, he must be sharp-sighted indeed, who can discern either wisdom or design.

*Third.* Farther, that second causes are truly efficient, we argue from what is involved in the doctrine of perception. We glanced at this topic in the preceding Lecture, but it is a point of too much importance not to be distinctly considered.

What is *perception*? According to modern and approved writers, it is neither more nor less than the *reference* we make to something external as their cause. Reid, Stewart and Payne, agree in this general statement. A rose is presented, and I *perceive* its fragrance—or, in other words, I have a certain agreeable sensation, which I refer to the rose as its cause. “Observing,” says Dr. Reid, “that the agreeable sensation is raised when the rose is near, and ceases when it is removed, I am led by my nature to conclude some quality to be in the rose, which is the cause of this sensation.” And Mr. Payne, speaking of the sensation of fragrance excited by a rose, says: “We refer the agreeable feeling to the rose as its cause; the reference is different from the feeling itself—and different from the object, or the rose—and the prin-

ciple of the mind from which this reference results, is the same general principle, whatever that may be, which enables us to draw conclusions in other cases ;" that is, as I understand him, the reference of which he speaks is nothing different from an act of inductive reasoning from the facts in the case.

Am I led, then, by my very *nature*, to conclude that there is some quality in the rose, and that this quality is the cause of my agreeable sensation ? then I am compelled, by my very constitution, to assign a quality to the rose, and to regard that quality as the cause of my sensation. In other words, I am compelled to believe that the rose does something, or acts as a cause. Here, then, let me say, is one secondary cause at least, and that in the physical world, which is admitted to be *truly efficient*, if *to do something* and to *be efficient* are not terms of radically different import.

What is true of the rose is true of every other object of perception, or of the whole external world.

There is no one object of sense which does not *affect* us. This *affection* we call a *sensation*, and this *sensation* we refer to something without as its cause. And here let it be remarked, that we have precisely the same belief that something without affects us, as we have that there is something without. The latter belief depends on, or rather is included in, the former. For how came we to know or to suspect that there is something without, but by supposing or believing that we are affected by it, or that it is the cause of our sensations. If our belief does not go to this, tell us where it stops. Does it stop with the mere fact that we are affected, and that there is a cause of this affection ? Then it does not go to an external world at all. It amounts to nothing more than a sensation, and its cause, without deciding what that cause is, something within or something without. But is this the testimony of sense, and this our belief of that testimony ?

Then, in truth, we have no evidence of an external world, and matter, for aught we know, is a mere figment of the mind. We cannot avoid this conclusion, but by admitting that our belief of something *without*, is inseparably connected with a belief that that something affects us, which is giving to it all the efficiency we plead for.

But what if I am unwilling to allow that something without really affects me? The answer is at hand—it alters not the fact, nor our unchangeable belief in relation to it. Certain it is, that in all our perceptions, we refer the corresponding *sensations* to something without as their cause. This reference is *belief*, and a *belief* that the objects perceived are the causes of the sensations concerned.

In our apprehension, this argument is *decisive* in favor of the doctrine that second causes have power; for the doctrine is identified with that primary belief which sways the mind in all its perceptions of things external. Nay, more; to believe in something external, and yet deny its efficiency, is, in some respects, more absurd and less defensible than the sceptical doctrine of no external world.

Hence, Dr. Brown has remarked, with reference to this theory, “that it is only an awkward and complicated modification of the system of Berkeley.” It professes to believe in an external world, while this world does nothing by which it is or ever can be made known; for it is not the cause of our sensations even. It affirms matter to be evident to our senses, while it makes no more impression upon our senses than if it really had no being. Our knowledge of matter, too, is only what it is *relatively* to us, and yet, relatively to us, it is nothing; for it affects us not at all: all our *affections*, certainly those which are external, come immediately from God. Can a system marked by such incoherence be founded in truth?

*Fourth.* It is agreed, on all hands, by those who admit the existence of matter, that it is possessed of

certain *qualities* which distinguish it from mind. But what is meant by the *qualities* of matter, other than the powers which it possesses, and which it develops in the changes which it produces or undergoes? The *qualities* of a thing, Dr. Brown has shown, are not different from the *powers* of a thing. They are terms of equivalent import, and used interchangeably for each other, except that the *latter* is not so often used with a passive signification as the *former*.

With equal propriety we say it is a *quality* of water to melt salt, and that water has the *power* of melting salt; and though the first of these terms is often employed to express the susceptibility of a substance as well as the power of a substance, yet, when used actively, it is precisely equivalent to the word *power*, taken in its more common and active signification.

What do we mean, then, when we speak of the qualities or powers of a substance? Doubtless, we mean to speak of something which belongs to the substance, and which is truly predicable of it. Here is an apple. I say it is *sweet* or it is *red*. What is the import of this language? That the apple possesses certain qualities or powers? Not this only; but that it possesses qualities or powers which *affect* me. I mean that the apple, when applied to my taste, produces the sensation of sweetness, and when considered in relation to the organ of vision, produces the sensation of color termed *redness*. What else can I mean? I do not suppose, surely, anything in the apple resembling the feelings it occasions in me; but I do suppose it possessed of certain qualities which I regard as the causes of my sensations or feelings; and hence, from the influence of the imagination, as well as from the poverty of language, I give to these causes and to their effects the same names. I say of the apple, it is *sweet*, to signify that it is the cause of a sensation which I thus denominate; I say it is *red*, to denote that it is the



cause, also, of a visual sensation, designated by the term *redness*.

If this be a correct statement of the case, (and I am not aware that it differs from the commonly-received opinion,) one of two things must be true; either that there is no foundation for ascribing qualities to the apple, or that these qualities are the causes, the real causes of the sensations whose names they bear. The case admits of no other alternative: for, if *qualities* mean anything in this connection, it will be difficult to say what it is, unless it be, that they are *productive powers* or *efficient causes*. If they mean nothing, we had better abandon the *term* altogether, and use a language more conformable to truth. Then we should have substances, but no qualities—a multitude of cumbrous things to be acted upon, (if susceptibility in this case were not also an absurdity,) but not one among them all capable of the smallest *action* or *reaction*. One difficulty, however, might possibly occur; we should not exactly know where to find these substances, since upon the present hypothesis, of their having no qualities and doing nothing, every conceivable means of learning their existence would be removed.

*Fifth.* This therefore we allege, in the fifth place, as a decisive argument on the question at issue. If second causes *do* nothing, they affect us nothing; if they affect us nothing, we cannot know that they exist.

This is Dr. Brown's argument, when he would show that material substances are as *truly* causes in their limited and humble sphere, as the Deity himself in the boundless kingdom which he fills. The argument is short, but clear and comprehensive. To myself, I confess it is exceedingly satisfactory; and though I have found many who did not like its conclusion, I have never found one who deemed it expedient formally and logically to attack it. The reason I take to be obvious; it

is too palpable and too cogent to be replied to. I give you the illustration of Dr. Brown himself.

Light *affects* us in vision, or it does *not* affect us. If it *does* affect us, it *does* something—it is the cause of our visual sensations. If it does not affect us, then in this case it does nothing—it is no cause, and for aught we can see, exists for no purpose; nay, the legitimate conclusion would be, that we neither have, nor can have, any evidence of its existence, unless it be specifically revealed, and revealed alike to every individual; for nothing short of this would answer the purpose.

A slight consideration of this argument is sufficient to show, that to deny the efficiency of second causes, is virtually to shut matter out of the world; or, if it be allowed to exist, that it can exist for no conceivable end, unless it be to remind the Deity when to put forth his power, and do that which he certainly would do without any such memorial.

On this subject, the language of the author to whom we have just alluded, is peculiarly striking.\*

“That which excites in us all the feelings ascribed to certain qualities of matter, is matter; and to suppose that there is nothing without us which excites these feelings, is to suppose that there is nothing without, as far we are capable of forming any conception of matter.” Hence his opinion that the doctrine of “*universal and spiritual efficiency*, in the sequence of physical causes, is but an awkward and complicated modification of the system of Berkeley.” For while it maintains that God does all, and matter does nothing, with strange inconsistency it professes to believe that matter *exists*, though no one can see for what end, nor have the least evidence of its being.

To show that second causes are truly efficient, I add

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\* Cause and Effect, page 62.

but a single consideration more, and that is *the mere fact of their existence*. They either *exist*, or *do not exist*. If they do not, our inquiry has no object; God alone exists, and he alone must have power. If they do exist, their existence must be something distinct and separate from God, though derived from him. This is equally true of matter and of mind. The question we put then, is, can we conceive anything to exist without *power*, *property* or *quality*, of some kind? For what is that which has *neither*? It is known by nothing, it is capable of nothing, and we have every reason to think is nothing.

The very existence, therefore, of a substance, supposes the existence of qualities or powers of some sort. But can *these* be supposed, and yet the substance to which they belong do nothing, and be capable of nothing? What are these qualities, when actively considered, but so many powers which are efficient in the production of change? If they produce no change, nor exert an influence to that end, we cannot know that *they* exist, or the substances of which they are predicated. But the point of our remark is, that their very existence involves in it the notion of some *quality* or *power*, inasmuch as it is inconceivable that they should exist without. "A substance without qualities," says the ingenious writer to whom we have several times referred, "if conceived to be an object of knowledge, seems to be a contradiction in terms; and the *qualities* of substances are only another name for their power of affecting other substances;" and, applying these remarks to material substances, he adds: "Whatever definition we may give of matter, must always be the enumeration of those properties or qualities which it exhibits; and if there were no *powers*, there would truly be nothing to define." It is scarcely necessary to say that the case is in no degree different with regard to mind.

We cannot better conclude this Lecture, than in the words of Mr. Locke.\* “The infinite eternal God is certainly the cause of all things—the fountain of all being and power. But because all being was from him, can there be nothing but God himself? Or, because all power was originally in him, can there be nothing of it communicated to his creatures? This is to set very narrow bounds to the power of God, and by pretending to extend it, *takes it away*. For which, I beseech you, as we can comprehend, is the greatest power: to make a machine—a watch for example—that, when the watchman has withdrawn his hands, shall go and strike by the fit contrivance of the parts; or else requires that, whenever the hand by pointing to the hour minds him of it, he should strike twelve upon the bell?

“No machine of God’s making can go of itself. Why? Because the creatures have no power, can neither move themselves nor anything else. How, then, comes about all that we see? Do they do nothing? Yes; they are occasional causes to God why *he* should produce certain thoughts and motions in them. The creatures cannot produce any idea or thought in man. How, then, comes he to perceive or to think? God, upon the occasion of some motion in the optic nerve, exhibits the color of a marigold or a rose to his mind. How came that motion in his optic nerve? On occasion of the motion of some particles of light striking on the retina, God producing it, and so on. And so, whatever a man thinks, God produces the thought, let it be *infidelity*, *murmuring* or *blasphemy*. The mind doth nothing; his mind is only the mirror that receives the ideas that God exhibits to it, and just as God exhibits them. The man is altogether passive in the whole business of thinking. A man cannot move his arm or his tongue—he has no

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\* Search of Truth, pp. 110, 111, by Dr. Beaseley.

power—only upon the occasion, the man willing it—God moves it. The man *wills*, he doth something ; or else God, upon the occasion of something *he* did before, produced the will and this action in him.

“This is the hypothesis that clears all doubts, and brings us at last to the religion of *Hobbes* and *Spinoza*, by resolving all, even the thoughts and will of men, into an irresistible and fatal necessity. For whether the original of it be from the continued motion of all doing matter, or from an omnipotent immaterial Being who, having begun matter and motion, continues it by the direction of occasions which he himself has also made ; as to religion and morality, it is just the same thing.

“But we must know how everything is brought to pass, and thus we have resolved it without leaving any difficulty to perplex us. But perhaps it would better become us to acknowledge our ignorance, than to talk such things boldly of the Holy One of Israel, and condemn others for not daring to be as unmannerly as ourselves.”  
[Locke’s reply to *Norris*, a follower of Malebranche.]



## LECTURE VIII.

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### ON SECOND CAUSES.

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#### ARE SECOND CAUSES EFFICIENT ?

**THE** doctrine maintained in the preceding Lectures was, that second causes, are causes *per se*, operating by their own inherent energy, and operating as truly in their humble spheres, as the Great First Cause in the mighty works which he performs. Nor do we suppose that this doctrine detracts, in any measure, from the Divine wisdom or power. On the contrary, we coincide with Mr. Locke, in thinking that the opposite doctrine takes away from the power of God, if not from his wisdom : since it denies to him the possibility of imparting to his creatures any agency whatsoever, and makes his government to consist, not in controlling agents, physical or moral, by a system of well adapted means, but in a succession of changes, or events produced by his immediate and sole efficiency. That is to say, he governs creatures which do nothing, and which from their very constitution can do nothing, and this without any means or instrumental causes ; for instrumental causes there cannot be, where instruments have no power.

But God, it may be said, can give them power. Be it so ; then they are no longer powerless ; they will certainly do something, when brought into circumstances

adapted to their agency. But what now becomes of the theory which denies to creatures universally all power, and makes God the sole efficient in every case?

It is a curious fact in the history of this controversy, that those who espouse the doctrine of the immediate and sole efficiency of the Deity, seem to consider it, as representing in a more sublime light the *Divine omnipotence*, by exhibiting it to our conception as the only power in nature. But they might in like manner affirm, that the creation of the infinity of worlds, with all the life and happiness that are diffused over them, render less, instead of more sublime, the existence of Him who, till then, was the sole existence; for power that is derived, derogates as little from the primary power, as derived existence derogaes from the Being from whom it flows.”\*

Light, say they, is powerless in vision, and yet they are willing to admit that light exists—nay, they are strenuous asserters of its existence—and are anxious only to prove, in their zeal for the glory of Him that made it, and who makes nothing in vain, that this, and all or the greater number of his works, exist to no purpose. For to what purpose can they exist, if they accomplish nothing, nor even make themselves known by any influence or agency whatsoever? “The production of so simple a state as that of vision, or any other of the modes of perception, with an apparatus which is not merely complicated, but in all its complication, absolutely without efficacy, is so far from adding any sublimity to the *Divine nature* in our conception, that it can scarcely be conceived by the mind without lessening in some degree the sublimity of the Author of the universe, by lessening, or rather destroying, all the sublimity of the universe he has made.”

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\* Brown on Cause and Effect, pp. 62, 63.

Thus reasons Dr. Brown, and so just and forcible is it, that it needs no comment of ours to give it effect. But let us look at this subject in another point of view; let us contemplate it as it stands related to the moral responsibility of man.

It seems to be a common sentiment, equally admitted by both parties in this argument, that *moral obligation* is founded upon *physical ability*; that is to say, a man must have a physical capacity to act agreeably to the law of his duty, or he could not be bound to act agreeably to that law. This is obviously a common-sense notion, nor do any insist upon it with more frequency or with more earnestness, than those who make God the only efficient cause. Upon this principle it is, that every man condemns himself, and condemns his neighbor, when he does not act conformably to the rule of duty. But can a man be said to have a *physical power* to act according to the law of duty, if all his acts, whether physical or moral, are the immediate production of Omnipotence? and, of course, are at all times just what that Omnipotence makes them? What is physical power or ability? Is it not something which pertains to the agent of whom it is predicated; something which is anterior to action, which *fits* and *capacitates* for action? But can there be such fitness and capacity, where *action* is impossible, and admitted to be so, without a new and Almighty Antecedent? an antecedent extrinsic to the agent, and in nowise dependent upon what he is, or what he does? and whose agency can never become his. How is the power of action *in him*, when it is admitted, and earnestly contended, that it lies out of him, and is in God alone? Will it be said that he has the susceptibility of action, if not the *power* of action; he can be acted upon, and thus made to act, and made to act in any given manner? Suppose it were so (though upon the principles of our opponents, that



created existence has no qualities, it is as difficult to conceive of susceptibility as of power); yet I say, suppose it were so—that man has the susceptibility of action—though not properly the power—that is, he can be made to act when God acts upon him; how does this help the matter as to his physical power? Is it not seen at once, that no such power belongs to him, since his actions flow not from what can be found within himself, and in the objects which surround him, but from the immediate fiat of the Deity. It is *this fiat* which gives birth to his actions; and without it they have no adequate cause, and consequently are impossible, and impossible for the want of physical ability. If the want of ability, therefore, be the want of power, who does not see that man (according to the philosophy of our opponents) has no physical power, as the basis of obligation, or the source of his responsibility? But there is another difficulty attending the system which we oppose; as it provides no basis for moral obligation by providing man with physical power to act, or not to act, in any given case, so it presents a hypothesis which seems adverse to our notions of responsibility. For as man cannot act without God act upon him, so it would seem he *must* act when acted upon, and act in the very manner in which the influence he receives shall direct. When he does *right* and when he does *wrong*—if right and wrong it could be called—it is owing to the *positive, immediate* and *all-controlling* agency of God. And yet he is bound to do the one and to avoid the other, notwithstanding this agency, if not irrespective of it. He is bound *to do right*, whether God move him to do right or not—though without that moving he has no power; and he is bound *to avoid the wrong*, though moved to it by Omnipotence, which would transcend his power, if he had any; but he has none, and since he has none, the absurdity seems the greater, that he should be required to *avoid* that which he has

neither power to do nor to *avoid*, and that when moved to the wrong by a power which is Almighty. This, surely, cannot be agreeable to our natural notions of things, nor easily reconciled with our acknowledged *responsibility*.

Is it a mere *passive* power? a susceptibility of being acted upon? Then it is like *mobility* in matter, a capacity of being moved, when a power sufficient is applied to move it: it is *susceptibility* of change, or rather of being changed, when an adequate cause is supplied. Is this, then, what is meant when it is said *that a man has physical power to be holy*, viz.: that he can be holy if God make him so, and that he cannot be holy if God does not make him holy; that he can be *sinful*, if God make him sinful; and that he can be neither holy nor sinful, nor act at all, but from the immediate and irresistible energy of the Deity? Wherein does this differ from the lowest species of mechanical power? and why is not man, to all intents and purposes, a mere machine, if such be the nature of his being?

Assuming the fact that man's power is nothing but *capacity* of action, when acted upon; and it is perfectly obvious that he neither will, nor can act, but when he is acted upon; and that he neither will nor can act in any other manner than according to the nature and tendency of the power which acts upon him. It is not only *morally* but *physically* impossible that he should act without this moving power, which lies out of himself; or that when he does act, his action should be otherwise than it is. In this respect he is like a stone, he cannot move unless moved; and when moved, the motion is the mere result of the moving power, and is in every respect just what that moving power caused it to be; while it is physically impossible for it to be otherwise.

Now, if this is the nature of man's physical capacity, we should be glad to see it reconciled with his moral

accountability. What foundation is there for *ought* and *ought not*, where it is plainly physically impossible that the event should be otherwise than it is?

Is a man bound to act in a certain manner, when he has not the physical power thus to act without the interposition of Omnipotence? and even when Omnipotence is exerted to make him act in a different manner? If this is true philosophy, I think it will be hard to reconcile it with common sense. Common sense, in accordance with the Bible, dictates that it is according to what a man *hath*, and not according to what he *hath not*, that God requires of him; that where *much* is given *much* will be required, and where *little* is given *little* will be required.

But it never supposes obligation where nothing is given, or which amounts to the same thing, where there is no physical power. In all cases it graduates a man's obligation by his physical powers and opportunities. It supposes that when a man acts wrong, he had at the same moment the *physical* power of acting right, and upon this power founds his obligation to have acted right. Let any one consult his own mind, when he has committed a wrong action, and what is the voice of nature in his bosom? Why, that he might have acted otherwise; that he had the physical power of acting otherwise, and therefore ought so to have acted. On this ground alone, he condemns himself for having acted as he has done. But remove this basis of obligation, and let him believe once that he had not the physical power to have done differently, and all sense of blame would instantly vanish. He would no more condemn himself, for what has commonly been considered a wrong action, than for hitting his head against a post in a dark night, or falling down a precipice, when compelled by a power external to himself. This fact is so obvious that nobody seems to doubt it. It is agreed on all hands that there

must be physical power to right moral action, or there can be no obligation to such action.

But what is it, we ask again, for a man to possess this power? We all go upon the principle that man has it, or he would not be a moral agent. Can we tell what it is? Is it the mere capacity of being excited to action, as the power external to him shall direct—that is, the capacity of being the subject of an action, just as a ball is a subject of a motion given to it by a force from without? If this is all, then man has power to do nothing but what he actually does; all his actions are physically necessary—the mere result of some power extrinsic to himself. Perhaps, however, it will be said, this is not all. It is not intended to consider man as the mere passive receiver of the action of another, but as becoming active himself in consequence of receiving that action. But in what sense does he become active? His action is the mere product of another's power, and the necessary product; just as much as the motion of a wheel is the product of the power applied to it. The wheel may be very active in consequence of this power, and may be instrumental in giving motion or action to other wheels connected with it; still it is *necessary* action, the result of physical agency out of itself. It is physically impossible it should not act as it does. If there is any difference between the man and the wheel tell us where it lies. Both are moved by a power extrinsic to themselves, and by a necessity strictly physical. For it is admitted that man has not the physical power of acting, but as he is acted upon, and that his action is the necessary result of his being thus acted upon. True, it may be said, but his action is different in its nature from the action of a wheel—it is intelligent and voluntary action. Be it so, it is not the less necessary, not the less physically impossible it should be

otherwise than it is ; for it is the immediate and necessary result of an extrinsic power or agency, which he is physically unable to control. It is not true, when he has acted in one particular manner, that he had the physical power to have acted in another particular manner ; for his power to act, is to act when acted upon, and to act in such a manner only as the power which acts upon him directs.

A wheel by its construction, let us suppose, is equally fitted to turn towards the *east* or towards the *west*, but it can turn neither way unless a power is applied which is external to itself. Is it conceivable that this power can be applied without determining the direction of its motion ? If motion is given to it, it will be either to the east or to the west ; but which of the two must depend on the application of the power. The power is applied, and it turns towards the east : is it not physically impossible, under exactly the same application of power—the same in manner, not in measure—that it should turn to the west ? For whether it shall move at all, and what shall be the direction of the motion, are both alike infallibly connected with the application of some external moving force.

Now, is the mind of man such a wheel ? If it is, it is perfectly certain that it has physical power to do only what it does ; for both its action and the character of its action equally depend on, and are infallibly connected with, the power which acts upon it, and which is extrinsic to itself. I will not say, though many will say it, that there can be neither virtue nor vice, if this notion of man's dependence and agency be correct ; but I will say, that it destroys the doctrine maintained by some, that man has a physical power of counteracting God's decrees, and of doing differently from what he does. It introduces a necessity into our actions of a perfectly physical character, since it supposes them to

depend on nothing within us, but on something wholly extrinsic to ourselves, and, so far as it is either supposed or believed, can scarcely fail to diminish a sense of our responsibility. But, happily for the cause of virtue, let men speculate upon this subject as they may, there is in every bosom a strong internal sense of right and wrong—a conviction that nothing can eradicate that we ought to act in one way rather than another; while this sense of obligation always presupposes some idea of physical power or ability to act in conformity to the rule of duty, and wherever this idea of power is wanting, there all sense of obligation ceases. An absolute physical necessity never was, and we think never can be, reconciled with the notion of moral obligation.

But how, it may be asked, shall we avoid this difficulty? Is not man dependent for his existence and all his powers? and if dependent the first moment of his existence, why not the second, and every succeeding moment? And if thus dependent, how can he act unless acted upon, or made to act by the immediate agency of God. This is thought to be a very cogent argument, and often relied upon with much confidence by those who employ it. Our reply is, man is indeed dependent for his existence, because that existence is derived from his Creator; and he is dependent for the continuance of his existence, because he will either continue or cease to be, as his Creator's will determines. So long as the creature is in the hands of God, to do with him as he will—to modify his being—to prolong or to annihilate it at pleasure—he may justly be said to be dependent on God. He not only received all from God, but he holds all, through every period of his existence, on the sovereign pleasure of his Maker. But this is not the kind of dependence which our opponents plead for. Man, say they, came into being by the immediate and positive efficiency of God, as did every other creature. In the

first and indivisible moment of his being, he depended on the immediate influx of the Divine power; and if thus dependent the first moment, why not the second, and the third, and as long as his being shall remain? Ah, why not? If creation and preservation were certainly the same thing, there would be more plausibility in this reasoning. But who can show this to be the fact? Philosophy, I am persuaded, can never do it; and the Scriptures are too indefinite in their testimony to authorize any such conclusion. They assert, indeed, that God upholds all things by the word of his power; but *how* he upholds they do not say—whether simply by preserving the forms of existence, keeping every order distinct, and maintaining that succession, subordination and harmony which his eternal wisdom designed, and thus including the idea of government—or by preventing things, even the first principles of things, from falling back into their primitive nothingness. The Scriptures are not sufficiently explicit to settle these points; and if they were, and we knew that the last idea suggested was intended, the subject would still be open to inquiry, whether *preservation* is a continued creation, as some have imagined, or whether it is what the word more naturally signifies, a mere upholding or continuing in being the first principles of things, with all their powers.

But we are not anxious to decide upon any of these matters. Let it be conceded, for the sake of narrowing the ground of controversy, that God's power is immediate in upholding and prolonging the existence of creatures. What follows? Not that they cannot act when thus upheld with all their powers, and act without his superadded agency. The truth is, they cannot fail to act, if their very existence involve powers, as on a former occasion we attempted to show. Their properties, whatever they may be, when actively considered, are but so many powers and modes of acting, which necessarily

flow from the nature of their being, and which can neither be altered nor diminished but by changing their essence or relations. If you give existence, then, you give power: if you prolong existence, you prolong power, which will certainly operate as often as appropriate occasion occurs—that is, as often as the substances to which they belong are brought into circumstances fitted to develop their powers.

To apply this reasoning to the existence of man. By the very constitution of his being, he is a rational and voluntary agent. If he exist at all, with such a nature or constitution as he has, he will *act*, and act according to his rational and voluntary powers. Having the capacity of thought, he will think; having the capacity of reasoning, he will reason; having the capacity of feeling, he will feel; of choosing and refusing, he will choose or refuse. It is impossible that he should exist such as he is, without exhibiting such properties and powers as are essential to his being; nor can he fail to manifest any of the peculiar attributes of his nature, whenever the appropriate circumstances arise. He needs not the action of any other being to enable him to act, for he has this ability in the very existence he has received, and will continue to have it while his existence and powers remain unimpaired. Activity belongs to his *nature*; and it is as absurd to suppose that he will *not* act, as that a percipient being will not *perceive*, or a sentient being not *feel*, when their powers are met with their appropriate objects. It is, in short, the very same thing. If a man with perfect organs of vision open his eyes upon the sun, will he not see it? If two and two are presented to his mind as an object of comparison, will he not perceive their equality? If he be asked whether the whole be greater than a part, will he not answer in the affirmative? Can he be a percipient and rational being, and his powers in these circumstances not be ex-



erted? Or is it necessary to the exercise of his powers, that he should be acted upon by a power extrinsic to himself? That is to say, though he has the power to *perceive*, to *think*, to *reason*, yet he can do neither but by a power superadded, and which is in no respects his own? This is to *give* and to *take* ad libitum. It is to *assert* and *deny* the same powers, at the same time; or, in other words, it is to adopt the absurd notion of powerless powers. There is, we apprehend, no mistake here, unless it could be shown that to think, to reason, to feel, are not properties essential to the mind. We admit, indeed, that the mind can no more think, without an object of thought, than the eye can see without an object of vision; that is to say, if the mind thinks, it must think of something, and if the eye sees, it must doubtless see something. But the point more immediately concerned in the present discussion is, can the mind fail to think when an object is presented to its attention, any more than the eye to see, when it is opened to the landscape in the beams of the noontide sun? It is evidently impossible; for the very presentation of an object supposes thought, in some of its diversified forms. They must have a strange notion of mind, who suppose it capable of existing without thinking, and stranger still, who suppose it invested with the noblest powers of perceiving, judging, willing—powers which enter into its very constitution—and yet powers which cannot be put forth, without the immediate exertion of Omnipotence to bring them into action. But the absurdity of this view has already been exposed.

There are two objections, however, which are sometimes made to the ground which we have taken, and which, perhaps, may deserve some notice: One is, that unless we admit God to be the immediate and efficient cause of our mental acts, and of our volitions among the

next, we have an effect without a cause. And the other is, that our doctrine of creature efficiency removes creatures from under the control of the great Supreme. As to the first of these objections, that unless all events are produced by the immediate agency of the Deity, we have an effect without a cause, I frankly acknowledge that I can see no foundation for it.

If, indeed, it be taken for granted that second causes have no power, I admit that such a consequence would naturally follow. For as God, upon this principle, is the only efficient in the universe, whatsoever is not caused by his agency plainly can have no cause. But we are not quite ready to concede the fact that second causes have no power. We are much inclined to believe that the contrary has been made somewhat evident; and at any rate, it is not a consequence to be charged to our principles, that if second causes have power, then we shall have effects without a cause. For where is the absurdity, I ask, in supposing that the creature is the proximate cause of his own actions? that he truly begins them? or, if you like the terms better, that they arise out of the nature of his being and the relations he bears to other beings, without the immediate intervention of his Creator? If he is a cause in any case, why may he not be the cause of his own actions? You see before you an elegant book; it awakens your curiosity to know something of its contents; and as there is nothing to impede your gratification, you take it into your hand, open it, and glance your eye over its pages. Here are several acts, all your own, proceeding from the powers you possess, and occasioned by the striking and agreeable appearance of the book which lies before you. From first to last, what is there here, for which you are not possessed of adequate powers? powers belonging to your being and essential to your very constitution? What

we maintain is, that man was made with a capacity for all this ; that it is essential to his nature thus to *perceive*, *desire*, will, act ; and that he would not be the same being that he now is, if he were not possessed of these powers and capable of these acts. These acts flow from his being and the circumstances in which he is placed, just as any effect flows from its cause. They are, therefore, not without cause, nor without an immediate and efficient cause. They proceed from the man, and from the objects which surround him ; and the man and the objects proceed from the power of God.

But how can God govern man, if man act without the immediate and positive efficiency of God ? May he not take a course which God cannot foresee ? or, if he foresee, which he cannot prevent, without breaking in upon the harmony of his works ? We answer, that we see no difficulty here. Man always acts under the influence of motive, when he acts voluntarily ; and when he does not act voluntarily, he acts under the influence of causes, either within or without, which are adapted to his various powers and susceptibilities. These causes are all known, measured and appointed, by the Divine wisdom, and their influence is just what God expected and intended. Everything, therefore, goes on according to the Divine counsel ; and, so far as this statement is concerned, according to a previous arrangement in the unsearchable wisdom and boundless power of the Great First Cause. Man, in these circumstances, will neither do anything, nor forbear to do anything, which had not been purposely provided for in the nature of his being and in the objects which surround him. God's government, on this principle, cannot be less comprehensive, nor less efficient, than if every event in the universe was the result of his immediate interposition. Nor, to our conception, would it be a government less

wonderful and glorious, as it would be a government of unfathomable calculation and foresight ; a government of *means* beyond all comprehension numerous and diversified, and yet perfectly adapted to the nature of his creatures, and issuing in the most grand and desirable results.

But whether such a government is possible is more than reason can determine. So numerous are the trains of antecedents and consequences, crossing each other in every direction, that we know not whether it be physically possible, in all cases, to produce the best issue, without the immediate interposition of the all-wise Creator and Governor. It is wiser and safer, therefore, we think, and somewhat more scriptural to conclude, that as all creatures and things are absolutely in God's hands, to modify their influence at pleasure, that he does often interpose, and make the result otherwise than it would be, if secondary agents were left entirely to their own native tendencies or powers.

But take which view we please, we see nothing in the doctrine, that second causes are causes *per se*, which interferes in the least with the most absolute control of the Supreme Being, in the world of matter and in the world of mind.

After all, it may be said, what difference does it make whether second causes have power or not, since it is admitted that, if they have power, that power is derived from the Great First Cause, and will always be exercised in such manner only as to fulfill his wise and eternal counsels ? Why may we not as well suppose that all things are done by his immediate agency, as that any of them are done by his creatures, since his power was originally necessary to their power, and since they are but instruments to execute his pleasure ? So far as moral character is concerned, is it not the same thing to accomplish a result by subordinate agents, as to accomplish it with

one's own hand? To this we reply, that the difference is great, in our apprehension; first, as it relates to a matter of fact—and secondly, as it concerns the moral character of God.

(1.) It makes a great difference in point of fact, or as it respects the nature and order of the universe. In the one case we have creatures who are distinct and separate from their Creator—real, positive beings, with their appropriate powers—beings which are not God, but the workmanship of God, called into existence by his sovereign power, and continued in existence by his almighty agency immediately exerted, or by the constitution given to them in the very act of creation. In the other case, we have, strictly speaking, no creatures, but only a succession of events, immediately produced by the agency of the Deity; a supposition full of inexplicable difficulties, overturning all our notions of matter and mind, and of the relations which subsist between creatures and their Creator; a supposition equally incompatible with the physical and moral government of God, and which, if pursued to its legitimate results, could scarcely fail to land us in the most absolute and deplorable scepticism.

(2d.) It makes a great difference, also, as it concerns the moral character of God. For if second causes have no power, then they do nothing, and all is done by the immediate agency of the Great First Cause; or, which is the same thing, God is the doer of all that is done in the universe, whether it be good or evil. But can such a doctrine be received for a moment? Who is prepared to say, that the action of every moral being, if being there can be, other than God himself, is only the action of the Great Supreme? that nothing is done in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, but what is done by his power immediately ex-

erted ; and when done, is referrible to him as its only efficient cause ? Surely, there must be some things done which neither God nor holy creatures can do. There are many falsehoods told, many deceitful and ensnaring motives presented, many acts of injustice and cruelty performed, any one of which, to ascribe to God, would be little less than blasphemy. Take the case of falsehood. Does it make no difference, whether God or man pronounce it ? Man may, and often does pronounce it ; but with God it is impossible, as it is in direct opposition to his immutable rectitude. We want no assistance from metaphysics to perceive in a moment that it is not the same thing for an act to be done by a creature of God, and to be done by God himself. The things are as widely separated, as if the creature was underived in his being, or as if, in his actions, he accomplished no design of the Almighty, or was able to defeat his purposes. He acts by virtue of his own powers, and under his own proper responsibility ; and the *morality* of his actions is ascribable to himself, and to himself only. But there could be no truth in this statement, if the creature were not an agent distinct and separate from God, and a moral agent possessing powers adapted to moral action. *Say* that the creature has powers, and he will certainly do something, unless his powers are powerless powers, which is an absurdity. *Deny* that he has powers, and you assert that God does all—all that is right, and all that is wrong in the universe. If an ensnaring motive is presented, be it ever so false or so foul, it is God who presents it, for the creature can do nothing, because he is powerless. If this motive is cherished or embraced, it is not the creature who cherishes or embraces it, for this is to do something, and something, of course, which requires power of some kind ; but the creature has absolutely none, and he, it would seem, must be absolutely

nothing, God and his acts constituting the sum of all being.

**NOTE.** It should be stated, in justice to the author, that to the original manuscript was prefixed the following note :

“ There may be *natural* power to a thing, where there is not all the power necessary to the existence of that thing. In some instances, moral power also is requisite, and where this is the case, natural or physical power, be it ever so great, is but a conditioned power, and cannot, of itself, be a power absolute or an adequate cause. It is only a power *if*. Enough it may be, of that sort of power, but not enough, in all the circumstances of the case, to make sure of the proposed or contemplated effect.”



## LECTURE IX.

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### ON THE FALL OF MAN.

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WERE it possible to consider the scriptural account of the fall, apart from all human philosophy, I should think it extremely desirable. First, it would evince a proper disposition on our part to submit to the testimony of God; and, secondly, it would be likely to conduct us to a true and safe result. But in present circumstances, I know not that this can well be expected. Every man has his own philosophy, and he can hardly escape its influence if he would. Insensibly to himself, and almost *necessarily*, he brings it to bear on the interpretation of the sacred text, and hence such a variety of interpretations of passages relating to the subject before us. God speaks plainly enough, not, indeed, in the language of a deep and recondite philosophy, but in a language adapted to the common apprehension of men, as all parties admit; and hence all parties appeal to the Sacred Word as both obvious and decisive. It requires but little observation, however, to perceive the influence of a previous philosophy in giving meaning and emphasis to the Divine record. If its *literal* sense does not accord with the doctrine or opinion to be supported, then it must be understood *figuratively*. If the figurative sense be obnoxious, then a literal sense must be maintained, whatever seeming probabilities lie against it. Sometimes the untoward



passage must be treated as *elliptical*, and sometimes as *redundant*, as the necessity of the case may seem to demand. Nor does the ingenious expositor find it difficult to show that the soundest rules of criticism have provided for exactly his mode of interpretation. The consequence is, it avails little for two theorists to sit down and shoot texts at each other, while each is strong in (the principles of) his philosophy, and possessed of the ordinary skill of modifying and interpreting the language of Holy Writ. The free and popular language of the Bible, though the best that could be devised for the purposes intended, gives ample scope for this species of *dialectics*. A mere glance at the controversies which have been going on in the Christian world, from time immemorial, is abundantly sufficient to justify these remarks. Their correctness, indeed, is evinced from our every days' experience, where any religious topic is made the subject of debate. Nor is it probable that *soon*, if ever, it will be otherwise. Our philosophy, *right* or *wrong*, takes a powerful hold of us, and gives complexion to the results of our theological inquiries. We may regret that it is so; we may put ourselves upon our guard against it; but while we have the common infirmities of humanity, I fear we shall never be willing, with the perfect simplicity of children, to hear God speak, and to take our notions of revealed truth exclusively from his lips.

We might derive an argument from this statement to review our philosophy, and to do our very utmost to place it upon a sure foundation, knowing the influence it is likely to exert, imperceptibly to ourselves, in our interpretations of the Book of God. But I choose only to say, let us beware of that philosophizing and speculative spirit which sometimes renders us proud and unteachable, unwilling to submit our understandings to the clear and unequivocal *voice* of Scripture, unless it hap

to coincide with our preconceived opinions, or with the philosophical grounds upon which those opinions rest. God is undoubtedly right in what he says, whether our reasonings be so or not; and it must be our highest *wisdom*, as well as *duty*, to yield an implicit faith to his declarations, whenever fairly made out to us. Nor have I any fear that you will not all cheerfully subscribe to this sentiment. But as we are now entering upon a subject which has long been controverted, and may be difficult to settle—a *subject* on which various philosophical systems have been made to bear, without coming to a satisfactory result—it seemed not wholly inappropriate to suggest the importance of special attention to the Divine record, while we examine the circumstances and inquire into the causes of man's fall.

That this event occurred solely through the instrumentality of second causes, we think there is much reason to believe. But when we say this, we do not mean to *deny*, but admit, God's wise ordering and control in the case. We do not suppose it happened because he could not prevent it without intrenching upon the moral liberty of man, but because for wise and holy reasons he deemed it best not to prevent it, though perfectly in his power. It is our purpose to say that we see no evidence of any *immediate, positive and direct*, agency of God in this matter, and, on the other hand, that we find no proof that he forbore any agency, or suspended any influence in the moment of man's apostacy, which he is known to have exerted previous to that event. We suppose that this lamentable occurrence was produced by the influence of second causes alone, unconnected with any immediate and special agency of the Deity, either *positive or negative*. But before offering our reasons for this opinion, it will be necessary to advert for a moment to the doctrine of second causes, as held by two distinct classes of theologians. One class maintain that

second causes are causes *per se*; that they actually do what they seem to do, by a power which is lodged in their very being; and that *this power* is as truly *their* power, as the power of the Great First Cause is *his*; a power derived and dependent, indeed, and subject to any modifications which the Supreme Power may ordain; yet, in the little sphere which it occupies, it is truly efficient, accomplishing what it appears to accomplish, whether in the *physical* or *moral* world.

The other class maintain that second causes are the mere antecedents or signs of their consequents, having no efficiency or productive power in themselves; or, if you please, that they are regular and stated antecedents to regular and stated consequents; but have no power or efficiency in producing their several results, this power being found in the constant agency of God. Of course, they merely indicate the *stated manner* of the Divine operation, which, however, is *immediate* and *direct*. In truth, God does all, and they do nothing. Yet partly for convenience sake, and partly with a view to fall into the common way of speaking, they are denominated *causes*, and their regular consequents are denominated *effects*. But no more is meant by these terms, than that the antecedents and consequents in any series of events are *statedly* and *uniformly* conjoined. Hence, in strictness of speech, according to this system, the relation of cause and effect is nothing more than the relation of antecedent and consequent—a relation, however, which is uniform and invariable. According to the one system, when it is said that an event has occurred through the instrumentality of second causes, and second causes only, it is obviously meant that the Great First Cause did not interpose to vary the result in any degree, but left these causes to work their appropriate effect, according to their own natural and intrinsic power, so that where

these second causes are the same, the result will uniformly be the same.

According to the other system, when it is said that an event has taken place through the *instrumentality*, or by means of second causes only, the meaning plainly is, that the course of nature is not departed from ; the same antecedent is followed by the same consequent, according to that law of Divine operation which gives uniformity to the sequency of things, the same natural causes being constantly conjoined with the same natural effects. But though the immediate and constant agency of God is here fully recognized, and recognized as that which constitutes the whole energy of nature, really producing all the changes we see ; yet no advocate of this philosophy, when inquiring into the causes of things, ever thinks of saying that *God* is the cause, unless he supposes a departure from the uniform course of nature. The object of his inquiry always is, to ascertain what is the immediate and invariable antecedent in any given change, and when he has discovered it, he says *that* is the cause, using the word cause, however, in the sense which his philosophy requires. Were I to ask him what is the cause of the irregularity of my watch, either in going too fast or too slow, or occasionally in not going at all, he would never think of saying to me, it is owing to the *interposition* of *God*, or it is to be ascribed to his almighty agency. Such an answer, it is obvious, would convey no idea at all, or it would convey a false idea. For though it might be true that the Divine agency was concerned in the event, either more immediately or remotely, yet this is not the thing inquired after, unless, indeed, we were looking out for a miracle. The object of inquiry is some natural cause ; and yet, not whether it is a cause *per se*, but whether there be some natural cause, and what it is which has occasioned the irregularity of the watch. The same thing holds true, with

respect to every other occurrence in the physical or moral world, whose immediate antecedent or proximate cause is sought. It would be absurd to resort to the immediate act of God for the explanation of any phenomenon, except where no second cause can be found, and where the event obviously takes place contrary to the settled order of things. Suppose a man had changed his politics or religion, and the event was to be accounted for, what would be the course which a man of common sense would take? He would doubtless apply himself to the acknowledged principles of human action; that is, to those circumstances and facts which are known to influence the mind in such cases, and which he may ascertain were present in this case. And when he had satisfied himself of the appropriate antecedent or antecedents in the case, he would tell you what he believed was the cause. But he would never say that God was the cause, unless he supposed the change was miraculous, and could not be accounted for by a reference to second causes and the settled order of things.

We have made this statement of the two systems of philosophy, with regard to cause and effect, and especially of the use of the term *cause*, when secondary and subordinate causes are referred to, for the purpose of having it clearly understood what we mean, when we say that man fell from his primitive state through the *instrumentality* of second causes. We mean not at all to raise the question whether these causes are causes *per se* or not; but let this question be decided as it may, our doctrine is, that the fall of man was brought about by the appropriate influence of second causes only. Make what you please of a second cause—let the influence ascribed to it arise from what source it may, the *nature* given it by its Creator, or the positive efficiency of the Deity—still, if in any sense it be a cause, and in any case it *can* be referred to as the ground or reason of

any change, then we are prepared to say, that man fell from his primitive state through the influence of second causes, and second causes only. We advocate this doctrine in the

*First* place, from the fact that no other causes are mentioned in the account which God has given us of the fall. The account is briefly this. After stating to us the happy condition of our first parents, as made in the Divine image and placed in the garden of Eden, the garden of delights, with no other restriction, as to their enjoyments, but what concerned the *interdicted* tree, it informs us that Satan appeared to the woman in the form of a seraph or serpent, and by deceitful and ensnaring motives, prevailed upon her to take and eat of the forbidden fruit. Her husband, through her instrumentality, followed her example, and thus they fell from their primitive rectitude into a state of moral degradation and ruin. I enter not at all now into the subtle nature of the temptation, nor into the peculiar circumstances and constitution of man, which opened a door to the temptation, and rendered him susceptible of its influence; but merely remark, what I presume will not be denied, that no one circumstance mentioned in the train presents us with anything but a secondary cause, in distinction from the Great First Cause. The facts, indeed, are remarkable, particularly that of the serpent's conversing with the woman, and which we have supposed to be *Satan*, that old serpent, the devil, who, on this occasion, assumed the form of a serpent, the better to accomplish his artful and malignant design. But even *this*, if we take the Scriptural account of Satan, is nothing beyond his power. From first to last, we have a train of antecedents and consequents, no otherwise connected or combined than what we might have expected in the natural order of things.

There is no appearance of any special Divine interposition—nothing which might lead us to suppose that *God*

*did* anything or *forbore to do* anything at the moment Adam sinned, which he did not do or forbear to do at any moment immediately preceding. Certain it is, that nothing of this kind is so much as glanced at in the history; which is the more remarkable, if anything of this kind did exist, since this is the only *formal* and *distinct* account we have of the circumstances of the apostacy in the Bible. There are several brief allusions to it in the sacred writings, but they are all founded upon this statement made of it by Moses, and add not a particle to his account.

Has God, then, or has he not—for we are to remember that this is God's account—has he given us in this recital all the leading facts in the case? *enough* fully to account for an event deplorable in itself, and of such gloomy interest to the whole human family? Or are we to believe that a very important item has been omitted, and one which we must collect from other sources, or the event of the fall remain forever inexplicable? I acknowledge, for one, I am not exactly willing to believe this. It strikes me as something like an impeachment of the Divine wisdom and goodness. For why were the facts in the case presented to us at all, but to instruct us? and how can they answer this design, unless they are full enough to account for the awful result which occurred? To my own mind, this is a powerful reason for believing that we have the *whole* story, and not a *part* of it, in the third chapter of Genesis—every fact, I mean, which is essential to a rational solution of the apostacy. To suppose otherwise, is to suppose a lame account, given by the infinitely-wise moral Governor, of a transaction in which his own honor was deeply concerned, and the interests of millions of immortal beings. But if this reasoning be just, then second causes only were immediately concerned in producing the fall, for no others are mentioned as acting in the case. I say *immediately* concerned, for

it is not denied that God himself, the Great First Cause, was remotely concerned. It was a part of his counsel, and the second causes in the case owed their existence to him, with all their powers, and to him it belonged to bound or restrain their influence at pleasure.

Perhaps, however, it will be said, if we take the account given in the third of Genesis as a full statement of the case, and we are not allowed to travel beyond it for a *solution* of the difficulties presented, we must, after all, remain in the dark ; for the facts here given do not account for the fall of man. Sound philosophy will never consent to admit, that a holy creature, as Adam was, could be induced, by any motive presented to his mind, to swerve from the path of rectitude, unless, in connection with the motive, an influence be exerted by the Author of his being, which should incline his heart to yield. I shall not stop here to examine the principles of this philosophy, but I would simply ask on what it is founded ? Has it facts for its basis ? If so, where are they ? A philosophy without *facts*, will go but a little way with a sober and earnest inquirer. How *often* has the experiment been made with holy beings in the condition of Adam, in order to determine the force of a temptation, and thus to ascertain the connection there is between an ensnaring motive, and the seduction aimed at by him who presents it ? Our first parents fell before the power of such a motive, if the history of their fall can be depended upon as a full and adequate history. Does anybody know that it is not full and adequate ? that all the causes are not named—or all that are material ? Who is prepared to say that the natural order of second causes was either interrupted or violated ? that the *temptation* and the *sin* did not stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect, as much as any other two events in the material or spiritual world, and that, too, by a law as settled and as uniform ? We had better examine a



little, and see how far our knowledge extends on this subject, before we set up our philosophy to bear against the fullness or accuracy of the sacred record.

But I want to know, says a man strong in his previous beliefs, how angels fell? There was no devil there to tempt them, or none that we read of. Must not God have changed the order of his providence in relation to them, as the cause of a change in their character? or in other words, must he not have brought a new influence to bear upon them by his immediate agency as the producing cause of their apostacy?

My answer is, God has not vouchsafed to tell us one word upon the subject, except the mere fact that they kept not their first estate; and as for our experience, it does not reach to such ancient and sublime matters. We are profoundly ignorant of the special circumstances of their being, and of the occasion of their fall; and we shall remain ignorant, notwithstanding all our speculations, till light is poured upon us from the invisible world. We may conjecture and argue, and argue and conjecture, till our heads turn round, but we shall never be able to advance a single step towards solving the problem of their apostacy, till we have facts and the circumstances of facts. We can say it took place under the wise ordering of Providence, and according to God's eternal counsels; we can say, perhaps, that God purposed it, and that what he purposes never fails of its end. But after all, how it took place, we cannot tell; what were the circumstances which led to it, whether in the minds of the angels themselves, or in things which were about them, we know not. The most we know is, that though once holy, they are now sinful—which is no slender proof that creature holiness is *mutable*, unless confirmed and sustained by the power and goodness of the Creator.

But why, it may be asked, did not all the angels fall, after the apostacy among them had commenced? I answer,

I know not, nor can any mortal tell me. There was, doubtless, a reason: either the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed in relation to those who did apostatize so as to prevent the influence of their example, or some new cause or circumstance was made to bear upon them, by God's immediate interposition, or otherwise, which was sufficient to dissipate the force of temptation if presented; but what this *cause* or reason was, lies utterly beyond the reach of our powers to ascertain, and mere conjecture on the subject is useless. The fall of angels, therefore, is an event too remote from our view to be distinctly analyzed, or drawn into a comparison with the fall of man, so as to throw any light upon this subject of inquiry. And as to the *recovery* of man, the case, in all its circumstances, is so different from the fall, as not to admit of analogical reasoning from the one to the other. This, indeed, has often been attempted, and attempted with great confidence; but, as I apprehend, without the least propriety. Man, we are told, cannot be recovered from a state of moral depravity without the immediate and sovereign interposition of God, and hence his renovation is often ascribed to the special agency of the Holy Spirit; and the argument drawn from this position is, that since a heart entirely depraved *will not* or *cannot be* recovered to a state of *moral purity* by the operation of second causes merely, but requires the immediate interposition of the First Cause, so a heart perfectly holy *will not* and *cannot* become corrupt, but by a similar interposition. God, it is contended, must work alike immediately and efficiently in both, or the change in moral feeling and character will never be effected. But who knows this? What are the facts on which this opinion rests? Admit that *man's* heart cannot be renovated by men or angels, nor by any other cause or agent, except God, the First Cause, the Almighty Agent, which gave birth to the universe,

and it does by no means follow that second causes cannot work his corruption and ruin.

We know neither more nor less of the power of second causes, but from facts; and we have no facts to oppose to the account given of the fall of man in the Bible. What is there said of the agency of Satan, and of the perverting influence of the motives he presented, may be true for aught we know, as to the connection established between one event and another in the moral world. How came we by our notion that one man cannot convert another from sin to holiness, with the same facility that he can persuade him to take a walk, or to join in a party of pleasure? Nothing but our experience, and the testimony of God's Word, can throw a particle of light upon this subject. All reasoning *a priori* would not be worth a rush. It is simply the knowledge of facts attained by observation, or the testimony of the Word, which enables us to judge in the case. From this source we learn that no persuasion used by the art of man, unaccompanied by the influence of the Divine Spirit, ever converts a sinner from the error of his way. But this knowledge helps us nothing in deciding upon a totally different question, to wit: *What causes are requisite to induce a holy being to sin?* Here, too, we must have facts which belong to the case, or all our reasonings are of no avail, and can never decide the object of inquiry. My knowing *how* man fell, throws no light upon the *causes* of his recovery, so as to determine *what* causes would be requisite in the case; and on the other hand, my knowing *what* causes are requisite in his recovery, cannot enable me to decide upon the sufficiency or insufficiency of the causes concerned or supposed to be concerned in his fall. The cases are widely different, and no reasoning from the one to the other is either philosophical or safe.

We know of a thousand second causes which can 1

life, but we know of none which can restore it. But because God alone, by the sovereign interposition of his power, can bring back the departed spirit, when it has once forsaken its clay tenement, we do not conclude that there must be a similar interposition of his power in the article of death, or that to die and rise again is equally a miracle. We believe that grapes are converted into wine, that wine may be converted into vinegar, and this again, by a putrefactive process, into water, and all in perfect conformity to the order of second causes established in the material world. But we do not believe that any train of second causes known in the universe is competent to reverse this order—changing water into vinegar, and vinegar into wine, and wine into grapes; and why do we not believe it? Because we have no facts on which to ground such a belief, and all our experience lies against it. We are not slow to perceive the absurdity of reasoning from one case to another in the natural world, unless the cases are precisely parallel; and we ought to be no less ready to discover the inconclusiveness of such reasoning when employed to solve the phenomena which occur in the moral world. True philosophy, whether applied to matter or mind, is but a history of facts; and the facts pertaining to one change will never serve for the facts pertaining to another change, unless the changes themselves are in the same substances and of the same character.

To our apprehension, therefore, there is no force in the argument brought from the necessity of the immediate interposition of Divine power to the conversion of a sinner, to show that a similar interposition was requisite in the apostacy of man. We may admit it in conversion and deny it in the apostacy, and neither philosophy nor the Bible opposes either of our positions. At any rate, we can see no reason to question that the

simple statement made by Moses of the fall of man, is not a full account of all the essential facts concerned in the event. But if the account be of this character, the conclusion remains firm that the fall of man was brought about by the sole influence of second causes.

*Secondly.* We derive an argument to the same effect from the views which must necessarily have governed the great deceiver in that transaction. Low as he has fallen in point of moral character, it will not be questioned that he is mighty in intellect, and must early have been acquainted with the laws which govern the spiritual world. His conflict with heaven, though it covered him with everlasting disgrace, neither weakened his intellectual vigor, nor diminished his stock of experience as to the constitution and tendencies of things. There is every reason to believe, indeed, that his knowledge of the spiritual world was enlarged by this event, and that he was better fitted to act the part of a seducer, not merely from the malignity of his disposition, and a total disregard to truth, but from his deeper insight into the springs of mental action, and the laws which govern thought. As an intelligent and voluntary agent, he must certainly have aimed at something by presenting the temptation to our first parents, and it is equally certain that he must have had some expectation of accomplishing his aim, or he would never have embarked in the attempt. For it seems to be a law of intelligent existence, never to attempt a thing when there is not the least shadow of hope or expectation of success. Where an object is believed to be absolutely unattainable, there all effort is out of the question. If it has been begun it will cease; if it has not been begun, while the belief remains the same it will never be begun. But admitting the great deceiver had a hope, more or less strong, of seducing the happy pair, on what was this founded? Was it founded on the presumption th

would work a miracle, and thus, by stepping aside from the laws he had established as a wise and benevolent constitution of things, *lend* the aid of his sovereign interposition to the nefarious purpose of this enemy of all righteousness? If he indulged such a hope, I own it strikes me as a very forlorn hope, having as little to encourage it as anything I can well conceive within the limits of possibility. Besides, if Satan acted upon this principle, one course of action promised just as fair for success as another. If he supposed that man could not be seduced through the influence of second causes, or according to the regular operation of the known laws of nature, but that God must specially interpose, and by a sovereign act of his power, as a new and distinct antecedent, effect the dreadful change, *why* his effort at deception? He might as well have spoken truth as falsehood, or whistled to the wind as to do either; for on this supposition there was no connection between his efforts and the ruin of man, and no tendency to this result, except what arose from the special interposition of God. What reason, then, could he have to expect success in one way rather than in another, unless he had by some means discovered the Divine mind upon this subject, and learnt under what circumstances God was most likely to interpose? Nothing of this kind, I presume, will be pretended. Of course, if Satan had any hope of success, which to every mind, I think, must appear unquestionable, his hope must have been grounded on his knowledge of the unstable state of man, and his susceptibility of being affected, according to the laws of his being, by the motives which might be presented to him. The artful manner in which he commences and prosecutes his attack is sufficient evidence of his method of reasoning on the subject; while the whole story, from first to last, clearly shows that he hoped to succeed, not by miracle, but by *address*. His profound policy is seen in *beginning* with the

*woman*, and, as has been commonly thought, while her husband was not with her. If she was inferior to him in mental vigor and firmness, and at the same time possessed of a greater share of curiosity, neither of which is improbable, who does not perceive the artful and deep-laid design? for succeeding with her, there was little reason to doubt that her husband would follow. I cannot enter into all the circumstances of the temptation. It is enough to remark, that it was conducted with the profoundest subtlety, first by awakening a suspicion of God's goodness, by inquiring *whether it was really so*, that God had said that they should not eat of all the trees of the garden? as if this was a thing hardly to be looked for from a Being of supreme beneficence, who studiously regarded their happiness; and then, when he found a listening ear, proceeding with boldness to affirm that the evil which had been threatened would not surely follow, though they should partake of the forbidden tree; for God himself knew that it would be succeeded by a wonderful improvement of their faculties, and an augmentation of their bliss—objects very proper for them to desire, and right for them to seek, especially by means so perfectly within their reach, and so certain in their results. Here were principles addressed which belonged to their being—the desire of knowledge, and the desire of happiness—*both instinctive*, and *both innocent* till indulged in a manner which God had forbidden, and expressed by an act against which he had warned them on the penalty of his displeasure.

The warning, however, was in vain; the temptation prevailed, and prevailed, as we think, from the subtlety of its character, and the circumstances of the persons to whom it was addressed. But the argument here rests not on this statement, but on the simple fact that the great deceiver expected to succeed by operating on the mind through the medium of the motives which he

should present, and this according to the established order or influence of second causes in the moral world. That he had such an expectation, all the circumstances of the case seem clearly to demonstrate. Was he mistaken, then, or was he not, as to the foundation on which this expectation rested? Did he understand the constitution of things in relation to mind, and to mind in a state of innocence and trial? The result of his efforts makes in favor of the supposition that he did; but what strikes me with far greater force, is the superior order of his intellect, and the opportunity he had, both before and after his fall, for forming a correct judgment as to the laws which govern minds. Without some knowledge of these laws, he could form no plans, calculate upon no results, and would be as powerless in the kingdom of providence as if chained in the bottomless pit. But he is not thus ignorant and powerless; he has a mighty field of action, and is represented in the Scripture as displaying an energy of the most fearful character. All this energy presupposes his profound knowledge in the science of mind; for if he were a fool in philosophy, he would be as contemptible in influence as he is base in moral character. From these considerations I derive an argument satisfactory to my own mind, at least, that the *great deceiver* reasoned correctly when he supposed that the seduction of our first parents was an event which lay within the reach of second causes, and might be accomplished without the special interposition of the Great First Cause. His opinions in relation to Job, and his subtle and vehement temptation of our Saviour immediately after his baptism, display views of the same character, and had we time to examine them, might be made to illustrate and confirm the sentiment now advanced concerning the expectations of the adversary in undertaking the seduction and ruin of our first parents in the garden. It is exceedingly manifest that Satan believed,



and still believes, that a virtuous mind may be drawn into sin through the agency of second causes, brought to bear upon the active principles of its nature. In the case of Job he only partially succeeded. In the case of Christ he was utterly foiled, for here was a countervailing power of which, it is probable, he was not at first fully aware. He either did not know that the humanity of Christ was united with divinity ; or if he did, he was not so well informed concerning the influence of that union as to make the attempt at seduction appear utterly unavailing, till the experiment had been fully and effectually tried. He went to this work with hopes more or less confident, according to the views which he took of this wonderful Person ; but that he had some hope of success, we think is past all question, for otherwise a sufficient motive to the undertaking cannot be supplied ; and that his hopes were founded substantially on the same principles which encouraged him in the case of our first parents, is a fact that appears in a high degree probable, from the subtle and profound policy with which he selected his several temptations. In view of the same principles he acts still, in all his attempts to seduce and destroy the children of men. He takes human nature as it is, and addresses himself to those active principles of the mind, of whatever character, by which he hopes to influence the conduct, and draw men into the paths of sin and death. His devices are numerous, and characterized by the deepest knowledge of the springs of human action. They display a philosophy of more profound research than ever yet fell to the lot of a Hume or a Berkeley, a Locke or a Reid, a Stewart or a Brown. But still it is a philosophy confined within the limits of legitimate inquiry, or simply to the laws which govern thought. Hence it is, that his power is so extensive, and so much to be dreaded by the human family.

His coadjutors and subalterns, or those demons incar-

nate who act under his influence, proceed upon the same principle. So far as they are distinct and intelligent agents in the work of seduction, they assume human nature as it is, and knowing the feelings and passions of men, and the connection which subsists between *action* and the *inducement* to action, they manifest no small degree of subtlety, as well as depravity of purpose, in spreading the snare for the feet of their victims. They never expect miracles, but they expect *results*, and results according to the known laws of human action.

I may be mistaken in the views which I have taken of this subject; but if not, the first sin of man, and all other sins, the first temptation and those which have succeeded, are alike in this, that they have occurred within the limits, and agreeably to the order, of second causes, and that no immediate or special interposition of the Deity was ever employed in the one or in the other. In short, my belief is, that there was nothing a whit more miraculous, and scarcely more wonderful, in the seduction of the first man, than in the millions of seductions which have taken place since. Means were arranged to an end, and such means as might be expected in similar circumstances to have a similar result, agreeably to that order which God has established between appropriate causes and their effects in the spiritual or moral world.

That God could have prevented the apostacy of man, if he had thought best, I do most cheerfully concede; but whether he could have done it without introducing some new influence to act directly upon the mind of man, I pretend not now to determine. I think it manifest, however, both from experience and from the Bible, that man can never be recovered from his apostacy and restored to the Divine image, without the intervention of an agency not known to belong to any second causes in the universe. And to this peculiarity of the case, I

attribute much of the language which we find upon this subject in the Sacred Volume, where the new heart is, in various and striking forms of expression, ascribed to the efficacious and special influence of the Holy Ghost. This fact of itself might be turned in argument in favor of our position, that the fall of man was produced by the agency of second causes only. For if God work in one way *as truly*, that is, as immediately and efficiently, as in the other, why is it not so declared? why this marked difference in the language of Scripture, in relation to the fall and the recovery?



## LECTURE X.

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### ON NATIVE DEPRAVITY.

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ONE of nature's laws, equally visible in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, is, that "*like produces like.*" Every species propagates its own kind. Plants and trees are not of spontaneous production, but each has its own seed, its own root, and propagates its distinctive species from age to age. There is often a diversity, however, among the same species, whether of plants or animals ; and this diversity in time may become so great as to form, in a subordinate sense, a new species. This is particularly observable among the various tribes of domestic animals. How different, for instance, is the Arabian horse from the Canadian ; the surly mastiff from the brisk and insignificant whiffit ; the English ox from the Italian, and the lesser breeds of the north and south. And there is scarcely an animal about us in which this diversity does not appear, though originally, it is supposed, the parent stock was the same. But even this diversity, capable of being widened as time advances, or adventitious circumstances intervene, is but a farther development of the great law, that *like produces like.* It shows how closely nature adheres to the principle of imparting to the offspring, not only the general, but many



of the peculiar, characteristics of the parent. While it allows not the general order to be broken up by a confusion of the species, it favors individual diversities, and occasionally widens and extends them. This is equally true of everything that has life, vegetable or animal.

But it is more important to remark, that the same principle is amply illustrated in our own species. Men do not, by any change of time or circumstance, lose their peculiar form, and other characteristic qualities. They have the same number of limbs, the same general features, as at the beginning, and walk upright from generation to generation. Now and then one is cropped and branded, or loses an arm or a leg, but this produces no change in the descendants of such individuals. Their bodily perfection, as to all its great outlines, is preserved by the uniform laws of propagation. And the same is true with respect to the mind. The deranged man or the idiot does not ordinarily communicate his specific calamity to his offspring; but the great law which secures the identity of the species, kindly provides against any such result. Still, every one knows that there are marked diversities in the family of man, and such diversities as lay a foundation for distinguishing them into different races. How different is the *negro* from the *Western Indian*, and the European from many tribes of the Asiatics! And this difference is a difference not merely of color, countenance and form, but a difference in the native temperament and cast of their minds—a temperament and cast of which we judge not by a direct inspection of their mental elements, but by their habitudes and acts. From what causes this diversity has arisen, it may not be easy fully to determine, though climate and modes of life have doubtless had a preponderating influence. But how this diversity has been *continued* from age to age, no man, we should think, would be at a loss. For does not every one see that it is

by natural generation—the offspring deriving their peculiar qualities from their immediate parents, and they again from theirs? This is a fact so palpable, and so much in accordance with the great system of nature, that we should be surprised to find a man who would deny it. But suppose such a man to be found, and he should say, “I have no doubt there is a connection between the present Africans and their progenitors, who lived fifteen hundred years ago; nay, I am willing to admit that this connection, whatever it be, has had the effect of imparting a sable hue to the present generation; but then I deny that anybody knows what this connection is, or how it operates: it is certain only that it is not a connection by *natural descent*, and that it does not operate through or according to any law of propagation; and this for two reasons: 1st. The present generation of Africans were neither born nor begotten of their ancient progenitors, but of their immediate parents who lived fifteen hundred years since; and, 2d. It cannot be supposed that generation has had anything to do in this business; for if this were the fact, then the man who has but one leg would beget a son who has but one leg, and a man who has but one eye would beget a son who has but one eye.” I say, suppose a man of this description could be found—and in these days almost anything is supposable—what should we think of his theory, and of the arguments by which it is supported? If he were a philosopher, should we not suspect he had not thoroughly investigated his principles, or that he had made his deductions under some false and perverted view of the subject? For do we not see what the relation is, which exists between the present African and his distant progenitor? that it is the relation of *natural descent*, through the medium of intervening generations? and can we doubt that the same law of propagation which God established at the beginning has been

regularly developed, in transmitting from father to son the sable color which now distinguishes the present race of Africa? And what is it but trifling to say that color, and form, and features, are not transmitted by propagation, because a broken tooth and swollen legs are not; as if no distinction was to be made between what is essential, or even permanently peculiar, to a race, and that which is accidental or adventitious to an individual?

Whatever is common to a whole species, or even to a well-defined class of that species, we say is *natural*, because it is what occurs to them in the ordinary course of nature, and what we expect to see in them from generation to generation. And why do we expect to see it? Only because we regard it as a fact that *like begets like*, as to all the permanent characteristics of the species. This is the law of propagation, and this *law*, with the occasional diversity we have admitted, is the link which connects any one generation with that which precedes it, and that preceding generation with the foregoing, until we come up to the primitive stock immediately created by the hand of God. There is no mistiness or darkness here; it is what the Bible teaches us to regard as the original appointment of the Creator, and what lies open to every man's inspection in the vegetable and animal world. I doubt if a man on earth can be found, who would not subscribe to this general statement. A difference, indeed, may exist, as to the immediate agency of Deity in this order of things. Some may attribute it solely to the power of second causes, a power inherent in the different classes and orders of being which God produced at the beginning; and others may believe that his hand is immediately and constantly employed in the regular production of the animal and vegetable tribes, as they successively arise. But who can doubt the *uniformity* of the laws by which the various species are continued, and according to which the offspring is made to resem-

ble the parent from age to age? Let God work as he may, *mediately* or *immediately*, or after both manners, the laws which govern propagation are the same.

But how will the doctrine that *like begets like*, apply to the *moral character and condition* of man? That it applies to his *physical* character and condition to a great extent, no one doubts. It secures to him a body superior to that of any other animal, and a soul adorned with various and wonderful powers, besides many other characteristics of physical nature more or less peculiar to his immediate progenitors. This, we presume, will be universally conceded. But how stands the fact, with respect to man as a moral being, and,

*First*, with respect to his *moral constitution*? Is this the *gift of nature*, and does it *come* to him by descent? Why should it not? What is his *moral* constitution, but his capacity to act as a moral agent, involving the powers of reason, conscience and will, and, if you please, the susceptibility of pleasure and pain? All these are bestowed upon him, as parts of his nature, and come to him as other constituents of his being come, without any agency of his, and through the medium of his parents, according to the settled law of propagation; and this not the less certain, whether the Author of nature co-operates with second causes or does not co-operate. In either case, it is according to his will, and under laws which he has established, that the human race are re-produced, from age to age, without losing any of the essential qualities of the species.

But I hear it asked, is man a moral agent the moment he is born? This may or may not be, without affecting the position, that his moral constitution is derived from his birth, or, which is the same thing, comes to him according to the laws of *natural descent*. For it is absurd to suppose that nothing comes to him by birth, but what is coeval with that event. It is a part of man's physical



constitution, and what is *natural* to the species, that he should be furnished with teeth, and a preparation for these organs is made anterior to birth; yet he comes into the world without them. It belongs to the male part of the species to be distinguished by a beard at mature age; but this natural and uniform characteristic does not make its appearance until its appointed season. Every one knows, too, that there is such a thing as *natural* affection existing between the sexes, and also between parents and children, and these affections are often denominated *constitutional*; but neither of them is developed at the moment of birth, nor until long afterwards; nevertheless, they depend on birth, and are (infallibly) connected with it as a part of nature's great law pertaining to the propagation and identity of the species. So this has been understood, from the beginning of the world, as the current language in all ages and nations sufficiently demonstrates. Whatever a man possesses in common with his species, has been held to be *natural*, in distinction from what is *artificial*, *adventitious* or *acquired*; because it is that which comes to him in the course of nature, and is the immediate or remote consequence of his birth.

Now suppose it were an admitted fact, that man is not a moral agent as soon as he is born, nor until some months or years afterwards, still there is a foundation laid in the very elements of his being for his coming to this state. By the laws of his constitution, he approximates to it every hour; and when the moment of moral discrimination arrives, he is placed under law, and, henceforth, his moral responsibility is a permanent attribute of his being. I ask, was he not born to this? Was not his moral agency provided for, in the very elements of his existence, and made as sure by the law of propagation as the shape of his face, or the existence of his beard?

By what law does an oak produce an acorn, and an acorn an oak? Doubtless it will be said, by the law of *propagation*. Is not the future *tree*, then, provided for in the existence of the acorn? For what is the tree, itself, but the development of the principles involved in this germ? As is the one, so will be the other; and agreeably to this law "of trees *producing seed*, and *seed producing trees*," a law as old as creation, are the various kinds of trees perpetuated, and their several species preserved. The same thing takes place throughout the animal world, *rational* and *irrational*. But the point which we wish to be prominent *here*, is that whatever characterizes the species at its maturity, as truly belongs to its nature, and therefore *propagated*, as that which appears in it and is common to it at an earlier period of its existence. Of course I may admit that the moral sense is not displayed at the moment of a man's birth, and yet justly contend that it is one of the elements of his nature, because there is provision for it in his constitution, and it will be developed in its season. He as truly *inherits* it from his parents, and they from theirs, as the conformation of his body or the color of his skin. The negro inherits his color from his progenitors, though he is not black at the moment of his birth, nor, as Dr. Good observes, until some months afterwards. I do not see, then, that we need to deny, or that we can well deny, that a man's moral constitution comes to him by birth, and consequently here *like begets like*. This was certainly the opinion of Cicero, that profound philosopher and distinguished orator; and I the rather refer to him, because his language goes to justify the language of Scripture, and the language which theologians have long since adopted on this subject. Speaking of the effort which man naturally makes to defend his own life when assailed, he says this is nature's law; "a law not written, but *born with us*; a law which we have not *learned, received* or

*read*, but which we have *taken*, *drawn* and *sucked* from nature herself; in which we were not *taught*, but *formed* or *made*, not *instructed*, but *imbued*." (See Oration for Milo, and Pictet. 393, Book IX., chapter viii.) Cicero here speaks of a part of nature's great law, namely, that which is concerned in self-defence. And *this* he says was *born with us*, *made with us*; that it comes not by *instruction* or *art*, but is inherent in our constitution; we are naturally *imbued* with it. Not that we literally begin to defend ourselves as soon as we are born, and before we know what aggression is; but that we inherit a constitution which, when properly developed, will come to this. Nature will teach us this law of self-defence, not only as a matter of necessity, but as a matter of *right*, and of course that we are not to blame when we act according to its dictates. Cicero's object was to exculpate a man who had killed another in his own defence, and therefore contended that this was not only natural but *lawful*, as it was in accordance with that great law of righteousness written upon the hearts of ALL men—a law as universal as the species, and the same at Athens as at Rome. But if this law was *born with us*, then we were born with a moral constitution; for to have such a law and to possess a moral constitution, are one and the same thing, or, to say the least, they mutually imply each other. What is *natural* to us, this celebrated man deemed it proper to say was *born with us*, because inherent in our constitution, or in the circumstances and condition in which nature has placed us. It by no means follows, however, that he either supposed or maintained, that whatsoever is *born with us* is absolutely *coetaneous* with our birth; but that whatsoever is derived to us from this source, and common to the species, might properly be said to be *made* or *born* with us, because it pertains to that nature and condition which we inherit from our parents. We are prepared now to

renew the inquiry, whether *like begets like* as to moral character?

We have seen, if we mistake not, the truth of this doctrine, in relation to many of our physical qualities, and no less certainly with respect to the fact of our moral constitution. Now, is the same thing true with respect to *moral character*, the immediate result of a moral constitution? I confess I can see no reason for doubt; the evidence of fact seems to be the same in both cases, and the voice of the Scriptures equally distinct and imperative. What is the immediate result of our moral constitution? Most certainly that we have a moral character, and that that character is a sinful one. This is not denied by those with whom we contend. They admit that we sin as soon as we are capable of it, and that we sin uniformly and continuously, until renewed by the Divine Spirit. They admit this fact to be as universal as reason or conscience, or any other permanent characteristic of man. They allow, too, that a state of sin comes upon all men as surely as a moral constitution comes, and that it comes at the same time, and in the same circumstances; the two things being always found in close and inseparable connection. Is not one, then, just as *natural* as the other? and are we not born to the one as truly as we are born to the other? *One* we regard as *hereditary*, because common to the species, and a sure and unfailing consequence of birth. Why should we not so regard the other for the same reasons, since that also is alike common to man, and the certain consequence of his *natural descent*? It makes no difference that one relates to the *capacity* of moral action, and the other to moral action itself; for both flow from causes equally connected with our birth, and both are distinguishing and permanent attributes of man in his natural state. With equal propriety, we say it is *natural* for a bird to *have wings*, and a *bird to fly*; the *organ* and the *action*,

the *power* and the *exercise* of that power, follow the same law of descent. This is as true of man as of the lower order of creatures, and as true of him in relation to his *moral* as to his *physical* character. The constitution he receives, and the circumstances in which he is placed, determine both his powers of action, and the distinctive character of his acts, whether physical or moral.

But where, it may be asked, is the propriety of comparing man, who is a moral agent, with creatures that are not moral agents? *Their* powers and acts may well be supposed to be *natural*, since they flow from their physical constitution, and from the circumstances in which nature has placed them. But man is of another order of being, and, as a moral agent, must be supposed to have a natural or physical power of doing differently from what he does, especially when he sins.

We admit that man is a moral agent, and that, abstractly considered, he has a physical power of doing differently from what he does. But what is this to the purpose? Every *voluntary* being, moral agent or otherwise, has a physical power of doing differently from what he does; but this makes no difference as to the fact of what he *will* do, or of what it is *natural* for him to do. Some horses have two gaits: they trot, or they pace, as they please; but ordinarily, one gait is more natural than the other, and of course more likely to be chosen. A dog can walk on three legs or on four, but it is more natural for him to walk on four, and we expect, of course, to see him on four, unless some unlucky accident induce him to hold up one leg while he goes upon three. A physical power in man, or in an animal, of doing differently from what he does, cannot hinder one course of action from being more natural than another, nor make it improper to say that he was *born* to one course rather than the other. We judge of what is *natural* by experience, and where we have no point

to carry, we never doubt that nature has a hand in those actions which we perceive to be common to the species. This is the unbiased voice of reason, as to those actions in men which we denominate *physical*. We say they *eat*, they *drink*, they *walk*, as *nature* has taught them; and though these actions are often modified by custom or fashion, yet their *certainty* and their *general* character are determined by the powers which nature has given, and by the circumstances in which these powers are developed.

For aught that appears, the same thing holds true with respect to their moral actions. The very moment they commence their moral existence—and we care not when it is—they commence a course of moral action, and this course, by the admission of all parties, is a uniformly sinful course. They sin as soon as they are capable of it, and sin continuously, unless prevented by a power which is extrinsic to themselves, and a power which is *almighty*. But this, we are told, is a great mystery—a mystery which nobody can solve—a fact which neither the Book of Nature nor the Book of Revelation has explained. But we ask, why not explain it, as we explain the *natural* but *voluntary* actions of animals? and as we explain the *voluntary* but merely *physical* actions of man? These, we are ready to admit, flow from constitutional principles, and from the objects which excite them, a physical power to the contrary notwithstanding. Why should our great modesty prevent us from reasoning in the one case, as all the world have agreed to reason in the other? The only objection I can see is, that then we should be compelled to believe, not in *physical depravity*, concerning which some persons have a moon-stricken fear, but in the fact that men are, by *nature*, *morally depraved*; that is, that they come into the world with such powers and susceptibilities, and in such circumstances, that without special Divine interpo-

sition, they will sin, and only sin, to the end of their course. Admit this, and we have a uniform cause for a uniform effect, and one, too, which lies open to every man's observation, and which, we shall presently show, is distinctly recognized in the Word of God. Deny this, and we must say that the uniform sinfulness of men has no cause, or none which is adequate, unless we resort to the immediate agency of God.

Take another illustration. Man has a moral constitution. How did he come by it? Plainly by his birth, as all his other powers and principles came. But can he have a moral constitution, without making moral discriminations? The moment his moral powers enable him to decide between *right* and *wrong*, he will decide between them, and continue thus to decide, more or less correctly, as long as he continues his moral being. It does not follow, indeed, that he will always decide justly, unless it could be proved that the moral sense is an infallible guide to moral action. The common opinion, and which we take to be the true one, is, that it often makes erroneous decisions which it must and will correct, as new light is poured upon the understanding. But the point which we wish to be noticed is, that the fact of having a moral constitution will draw after it *acts* of moral discrimination, and these more or less correct as the judgment is informed. Does not correct usage, then, warrant us to say, that as it is *natural* to man to have a moral constitution, so it is no less *natural* that he should make moral distinctions? for how do we know that he has such a constitution, but from the fact of his making these distinctions? The existence of the power and the exercise of it are closely conjoined. Hence, if one be from *nature*, the other must be from nature also. For it would be absurd to suppose that the cause is derived from a particular source, but not the effect which flows from the cause. If a tree produce a branch, and

the branch a bud, and the bud fruit, do we not refer the branch, the bud and the fruit, to the parent tree, which, *seriatim*, produced them all? On this principle it is that men have always agreed to call that *natural*, which was traceable to birth, whether the thing so traced related to a *power*, or to the *exercise* of a power—whether it were something coetaneous with birth, or did not arrive until months or years afterwards. Cicero, who understood the power of language as well as any other man, did not consider it a departure from *correct usage* to say that the *law* which leads us to distinguish between *right* and *wrong*, was *born with us*; and, of course, that the *fact* of our thus distinguishing was from nature, because derived from our birth. The power, and the exercise of the power, were obviously in his view from the same source. Now if we take but a single step more, and a step which seems unavoidable from those already taken, and we come to the entire powers of a moral agent placed under law, and to his *acts* in relation to that law, the very existence of the moral sense supposes and implies all other powers essential to a moral agent. But the moment a man exists as a moral agent, he will *act* as a moral agent, and either obey or disobey the law of his duty; or, if it should be said he may fail of his duty by *not acting*, still it is not less true that then he would not be conformed to the law. Conformity is holiness, and non-conformity is sin. Allow, then, that he sins as soon as he is capable of it, and that he sins uniformly and continuously, is not this *natural* to him and what he is born to, as much as that he should be a moral agent, or that he should make moral discriminations? It is *something* common to the species, what is found true of them in all ages, in all countries, and under every mode of moral culture. So far, then, as the mere facts are concerned, what higher proof can we have that this universal depravity is *natural*? I do not mean *physical* in

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opposition to *moral*. It comes to man as early and as certainly as his powers of moral agency come, and is developed in constant conjunction with those powers. If I inherit my moral constitution, therefore, by *descent*, I inherit my moral character by descent also; for both, according to the established order of things, are the unfailing consequence of my being born a *man*, and not an ape. But when I say *I am born a man*, I do not mean simply that I am born with the powers of a moral agent, for no specific kind of moral action could be inferred from this fact alone—it might be *holy*, it might be *sinful*; but I mean that I am born with all the propensities, powers and susceptibilities of my nature, in those circumstances, and with those objects, which have an influence in the development of my powers. In such a birth may be found the proper source of my physical and moral acts, the one as much as the other; and here lies the proximate cause of that readiness and eagerness to sin which man has uniformly displayed through a thousand generations. Do any still doubt of this? Let me ask them why they trace the habitudes and acts of animals to their constitution, and their constitution to their birth? and *why* they do the same thing with respect to the mere physical propensities and actions of men? Here they do not deny that nature does something, nor that she supplies an all-controlling cause in the gift of existence, and in the character and circumstances of that existence. Why should they hesitate when they come to moral action, which as certainly flows from powers which are the gift of nature, and from circumstances which nature has ordered and provided? If they doubt *moral* causation, let them say so, and we shall know where they are. But if they admit it, why not admit a cause which is evidently at hand, and which exhibits itself in the same manner, and with the same certainty, as causes which are concerned in mere physical action? No man

hesitates to say that it is *natural* for a father to love a son, and for a son to love a father ; but why does he say this ? Because this love is common to the species, and is to be expected wherever these relations exist. The stated and uniform fact is regarded as settling the question that the affection is *natural*. Can any good reason be offered, why the same *uniformity of fact*, in relation to moral action, should not determine this also to be *natural* ? But if natural, nature has a hand in it, and it must be traced to our birth. To this conclusion I think we shall most certainly be brought, if we impartially consider the facts in the case, unless some testimony from the Bible can be found to counteract it. What, then, is the voice of the Scriptures ?

Before making our appeal to particular passages, let me state in general terms what I consider the Bible account to be.

This book teaches that man, in his primitive state, was made *upright*, or in the moral image of God—not merely innocent, and capable of acquiring a moral character of some kind, but with such powers and susceptibilities, and with such tendencies of nature arising from these powers and the objects which surrounded him, as to make it morally certain that he would do *right* rather than *wrong*, unless assailed by some temptation of peculiar force, which should disturb the natural and regular development of his powers. His first moral acts, therefore, were *right* and well-pleasing to God. But temptation came, and he fell ; he ate of the tree whereof God commanded him not to eat. This first offence was followed by a state of unmingled depravity, because it brought him under the curse of that law which threatens *death* to the transgressor, *death* in all its forms, *death* as opposed to *life*, the *life* which he actually enjoyed while obedient, and which he had the prospect of enjoying in a state of *communion* with his Maker forever. This death

involved the loss of all good, and the endurance of all evil, and consequently subjected him at once to the loss of the Divine image, and a state of moral depravity—to all the miseries of this life, the extinction of animal existence, and endless sufferings in a future state. Such were the consequences of the first offence to Adam, as we judge, from the very nature of the case, and from the development of the curse in relation to his posterity, as well as from the provisions made in the plan of redemption for the removal of that curse. The Bible nowhere expressly says that Adam became *totally depraved* upon his first offence, but it declares this to be the state of his posterity, which is a good reason for believing that it was so with him, especially if it be true that *like begets like*, and if the new birth was necessary to Adam, as it is to all other men, a fact, perhaps, which none will either deny or doubt. Now, if we mistake not, the Bible asserts that a state of entire depravity came upon all men through Adam; that *his* transgression was the occasion of *their* transgression, *his* death of *their* death—spiritual death first—death temporal and eternal afterwards. Nor is this all. It clearly intimates that these consequences, and especially a state of moral depravity, comes upon the posterity of Adam, through the medium of their birth—they, as his descendants, inheriting the same moral dispositions which took possession of his heart immediately upon his fall. That a great change took place in his moral nature, when he fell under the curse, is past all doubt. Antecedent to this, he delighted in the character and government of God; his obedience was natural, sweet and refreshing; he had no greater freedom, no greater joy, than to do the will of his Creator. But when he had once ventured on disobedience, all within was changed; he became alienated from the Author of his being, he dreaded his presence, and hated his commands. Passion and appetite took the ascendancy

of reason, and supreme self-love became the master-spring of his soul. By the righteous appointment of God, the very same characteristics were transmitted to his posterity, and by the same law that their physical existence and attributes were transmitted—the law of propagation.

Now for the proof of this. The fact is not questioned, that as Adam *was*, after his fall, *so are* his posterity, in point of *moral character*. But do they become such by *natural* descent? Our appeal is to the sacred page. But as the examination of this subject will occupy too much time to be included in the present lecture, we shall pause here, and renew the inquiry in a subsequent discussion.



## LECTURE XI.

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### ON NATIVE DEPRAVITY.

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IN a former Lecture we endeavored to establish the following principles:

*First.* That man, as a *physical* being, derives his existence and his qualities from his *birth*; in other words, that *he is what he is* in consequence of the law of propagation or *natural* descent. We confined the remark to what man is *naturally*, in distinction from what he is *artificially*, or by means of education, and what he may be by accident. We limited the remark also to what is common to the class or species to which he belongs, and to those peculiar properties and qualities which any one generation may inherit from their immediate progenitors.

*Second.* That man, as a *moral* being, derives his existence no less from his birth, including what is essential to his moral agency, together with those objects and circumstances which naturally attend him, and which call his powers into action. For what constitutes him a *moral* being but a moral constitution? and what is this constitution but a capacity for moral acts, taken in connection with the appropriate circumstances of his existence? All these belong as much to the *pura naturalia* as his bones and muscles, or any other physical qualities

of his body or mind. They come without his agency, and according to the settled law of propagation, and this no less certainly, whether God work *mediately* or *immediately* in bringing them into being.

*Third.* That man's physical *acts* are derived from his birth, inasmuch as their immediate causes are thus derived; and hence they are said to be *natural* and *hereditary*. They are not anterior to his agency, because they involve his agency; but they are provided for, and made certain, by his physical constitution, and by the circumstances in which he is placed. They are surely not without cause, and what cause can there be but that which is found in his natural powers and susceptibilities, and in the objects which meet him, and act upon him, in the state to which he is introduced by his birth?

*Fourth.* Acts of moral discrimination, which every man performs as soon as he possesses a moral sense, may justly be termed *natural*, because they flow necessarily from the powers of his being—powers common to the race, and derived through the medium of birth, or according to the established laws of procreation. These acts are not in themselves *moral*, as having a character *morally* good or *morally* bad, but are called *moral*, as many moral causes are, simply because they pertain to moral things. They are the exercise of a power derived from nature, and are therefore themselves thus derived, the effect falling into the same predicament with its cause. Hence, men in all ages have agreed to call that *natural* which was traceable to birth, whether it were a power or the exercise of a power, whether it were coeval with birth or existed afterwards.

*Fifth.* We asserted, and endeavored to, prove, so far as the testimony of facts is concerned, that the *moral acts* of men, antecedent to regeneration, are traceable to their birth, on the same principles, and with equal certainty, as we trace their *physical acts* and acts of moral discrimi-

nation to that source. That men will act *morally*, in consequence of a *moral* constitution, is not doubted by any one; and that in present circumstances they will act *morally* wrong, and that *uniformly*, till they are renovated by the power of God, is admitted by Calvinists of every school. But the question is, how does it appear that this uniformly wrong action is traceable to birth, or connected with the law of propagation? Our answer is, just as it appears that the *voluntary acts* of animals, and the *voluntary* but physical actions of men, are traceable to this source. We admit the law of propagation to exert a decisive and controlling influence in the last two cases; why not in the former? A cause there must be for this state of things, and a uniform cause; why not resort to that which is at hand, and which, in all analogous cases, is deemed satisfactory? But we promised to turn our attention to the Bible, and to make our last appeal there. And as introductory to its specific testimony, we made a general statement of what we conceived the Bible account to be. We resume the subject here, and ask, what does the sacred page teach us, on the subject of *native* or *hereditary* depravity? We are told, in the book of Genesis, that when Adam begat Seth, "he begat a son in his *own likeness, after his image.*" Does this relate to his *moral* likeness, his *moral* image especially, though not to the exclusion of intellectual or physical resemblance? This has been a common opinion, and certainly of some who were no mean proficient in sacred literature. Nor is it to be doubted, that the son *was*, in fact, in the moral likeness of the father, if that likeness be taken to mean the depraved dispositions and character into which Adam fell by his apostacy; for in this likeness has every son and daughter of Adam been found since. But the question is, did the inspired penman intend to teach this fact, when he said Adam begat a son in his own likeness? If he did, the passage

has a point and force which would be wholly wanting without it. But some may say that the text simply asserts that Adam begat a son, with all the lineaments of human nature, irrespective of moral character, and thus like himself; that is to say, he begat a son who was a *man* and not a *horse*. Such a fact would seem to impart but little information, and none, as I conceive, which could be turned to any moral account. But suppose the likeness to be *moral*, who knows, it may be said, whether it was sinful or holy? Perhaps Adam had repented, and become a good man, and begat his son in his own likeness in this respect; that is, he begat him with moral dispositions similar to his own, or with principles which would certainly lead to these.

Such an interpretation carries its own refutation along with it, since we know that men are brought to the exercise of right moral feelings in this way. Doubtless, Seth was born into the world as every other man has been born since, without any moral likeness to God or good men, and without any preparation of mind or of circumstance which would naturally issue in such likeness. Of course, the piety which he is supposed afterwards to display, came not from *nature*, but from *grace*. Have we not a right then, to say that this text bears strongly on the fact of man's native sinfulness, and teaches not only a proneness to sin in the earliest stages of his existence, but that this proneness comes from the law of his birth, the father transmitting a depraved nature to his son?

Several passages in the book of Job furnish ground for a like inference. Though we cannot appeal to this book as of decisive authority, except where God himself speaks, yet the sentiments of holy men in the patriarchal age are, on this subject, entitled to peculiar respect. In the fifteenth chapter one of Job's friends exclaims: "What is man, that *he* should be clean?



or he that is born of a woman, that *he* should be righteous?" As if moral impurity attached to man's earliest existence, and flowed to him as a consequence of his birth. The same thought is conveyed in the twenty-fifth chapter: "How then can man be justified with God? or how can *he* be clean that is *born of woman*?" Why cannot *he* be clean who is born of woman? only because it would be incompatible with that law of generation which insures to the offspring the same general qualities which are *natural* to the parent, and common to the species. And again (Job eleventh): "For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Here the comparison is strong, and indicates not so much the ignorance and stupidity of man, as his *native* and *inherent* perverseness; a perverseness as *instinctive* and *original* as the wildness and intractability of the ass's colt. To the same effect Job himself speaks (chapter fourteenth), when he says to God: "Who can bring a *clean* thing out of an *unclean*? Not one." He had before pleaded the frail and transient nature of his existence, together with his multiplied sufferings, as a reason for the Divine compassion; and now he confesses, and pleads his *native corruption*, not as a bar to the Divine justice, but as a consideration suitable to move the Divine mercy. He deeply felt that he could not stand in judgment with God. Such is the view which *Pool* takes of this passage, and so far as I know, it is in accordance with commentators generally. But why so difficult or impossible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean? The same reason must be returned as before, because the law of propagation insures the same moral character to the offspring which was naturally possessed by the parent, and which was a permanent characteristic of the race. The language of David in the fifty-eighth Psalm, may reasonably be regarded as supporting the same truth, though perhaps not so clear-

ly and unequivocally. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." But why do they go astray so *early*, and so *certainly*, it may be asked, if their wickedness be not inbred? if its immediate causes are not derived from their birth, and infallibly provided for, in the very elements of their being? It is added by the Psalmist, "*Their poison is like the poison of a serpent;*" not only deadly in its effects, but *naturally* inherent in its subject; a property which belongs to the species, and descends with them from generation to generation. That this was the sentiment which David intended to convey, there is the more ground to believe, from the confession which he makes concerning himself in the fifty-first Psalm: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" or, as the words are rendered by Calvin and Stewart: "Behold I was *born* in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." If this be not a confession of *native* depravity, or *inborn* sin, it would be hard to tell what is; for to be conceived *in sin*, and brought forth in *iniquity*, mark as strongly as words can do, not only the early existence of sin, but that *natural birth* is the immediate source of sin. Surely the Psalmist must have supposed that it came to him by descent, for he was conceived and born in it. But a doubt is raised concerning the interpretation of this text: who knows whether the Psalmist speaks concerning his own sin, or the sin of his mother?

Exegetical considerations, a late critic remarks, cannot determine. But to what purpose, let me ask, should David speak of his mother's sin, even on the supposition that she was notoriously infamous, a supposition equally gratuitous and incredible? It is his own sin which he confesses and deplores throughout this Psalm, and his own forgiveness and sanctification for which he pleads. Mark the peculiarity of his language: "Have mercy

upon *me*, O God, according to thy loving kindness ; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from *mine* iniquity," not another's, "and cleanse *me* from *my sin* ; for I acknowledge *my* transgressions, and *my sin* is ever before me. Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. Behold, I was *born in iniquity*, and *in sin did my mother conceive me* ;" plainly turning his eye inward, like a true penitent, upon the early and deep pollution of his heart, as he had just before turned it outward, upon those overt acts which had so greatly incensed the Divine Majesty ; tracing, as Calvin remarks, his outward transgressions to their internal source—the sinful nature which he inherited from his parents. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom ;" words which show that his eye was strongly fixed upon his *own inward* man, not the inner or outer man of another. "Purge *me* with hyssop, and *I* shall be clean ; wash *me*, and *I* shall be whiter than snow. \* \* \* Create within *me* a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within *me*." This is the style which runs through the whole Psalm, and sufficiently demonstrates how entirely his thoughts were occupied with his own case, and with what concerned the inner man chiefly. All this well became him as a true penitent. But to suppose, as some have done, that instead of looking to the early and deep corruption of his heart, and confessing this hidden source of iniquity, he turned away from his own sin to confess the sin of his mother, and in a matter, too, in which the hand of God rather than his mother was concerned, is, in our apprehension, a strange and unwarrantable perversion of the text. And what is to be gained by it ? Why, to set aside an important passage, to which the church has uniformly appealed, for nearly twenty centuries, in proof of the

doctrine of *native* or *hereditary* depravity. For, let David be considered only as speaking of his own sin in this place, and his single acknowledgment settles the question that man is a sinner by *nature* or *birth*; for this we shall hereafter show is the scriptural import of this phrase. But impartiality requires that we should hear both sides. They who suppose that David here speaks of his mother's sin, and not his own, consider him as simply confessing that he sprang from a corrupted source, and was the degenerate plant of a strange vine; having no special regard to the depravity of his heart, and much less to the fact that this depravity came to him by descent. What indication, I ask, was this of his penitence, and especially of a heart bleeding with a sense of his aggravated guilt? It was, indeed, a matter of some humiliation, to have descended from a sinful and dishonorable parentage; but this was no fault of his, nor did it infer his want of innocence, if the doctrine of hereditary depravity be denied. It laid no foundation even for saying that he was the *degenerate plant* of a strange vine. But admit this doctrine, and the language is full of import, amounting to an ingenuous confession that he was depraved from the beginning, and depraved by *nature* or *birth*. I cannot but think it was an oversight, when a certain modern critic allowed this confession of David to mean, "that he was *the degenerate plant of a strange vine*"; for, according to well-established use, this phraseology carries us at once to the great law of propagation, by which the offspring or the shoot participates in the essential qualities of the parent stock. We might here close our remarks upon this passage, but some one will doubtless ask, if David here speaks of his own sin, will it not force us to conclude that he was actually a sinner, not only as soon as he was born, but even before, for he was conceived in sin, as well as brought forth in iniquity? I apprehend no such consequence will follow. We must

give a true interpretation, but we are not always bound to interpret to the letter. David doubtless intended to express two facts: that he had a sinful nature, and that his nature descended to him from his parents through the medium of his birth. I say a *sinful nature*, by which I mean a nature that would certainly lead him to sin as soon as he was capable of it, be that when it may. *Less* than this, I think, the Psalmist certainly could not mean, and I see no evidence that he intended more. *To be conceived in sin*, is to be conceived in circumstances which, according to the course of nature, will infallibly issue in sin; and to *be born in iniquity*, is only a strong expression for being brought forth with such a nature and in such circumstances as, according to a Divine constitution, can have no other moral result than a state of active and deep-rooted depravity.

We adopt this interpretation, because we think it natural and agreeable to the *usus loquendi*, and because it presents the same view as taught elsewhere of the doctrine, that *like begets like*, in moral beings as well as in physical. Other passages from the Old Testament might be adduced, which fully accord with those already examined, but we have not time to consider them now. Let me turn your attention for a moment to two or three passages in the *New*. I refer you first to John iii. 6, where our Lord teaches Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." He had just said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But Nicodemus, not understanding him, inquires, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" as if Christ had spoken only of a *natural birth*. To correct this mistake, and to show that it was a *moral* or *spiritual* birth which he intended, the Saviour replies, "Except

a man be born of *water*, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And why? "*For that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;*" implying that *man*, by *nature*, or according to his *first birth*, is altogether *sinful*, and therefore needs a moral or spiritual change to fit him for the kingdom of God. Flesh and spirit in this passage are strongly antithetical, and if one relates to moral character, the other must do so also. But does anybody doubt that, to be *born of the Spirit*, is to undergo a moral change, to have a new heart, and thus be renewed after the image of God? What, then, must it be to be *born of the flesh*, but to be born in a state of alienation from God, and under the dominion of sin—in other words, in a state of moral depravity? Besides, it is expressly asserted that that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. The effect in both cases partakes of the nature of the cause, and therefore receives the same name. From sinful *human nature* proceeds, by natural generation, that which is sinful; and from the *Spirit of God* proceeds, by a supernatural operation, that which is holy. In the one case man is *born a sinner*, in the other he is *born a saint*. The first birth is *natural*, because it takes place according to the course of nature, and is common to the species; the *second* is *supernatural*, because it is an occurrence above or beyond nature, and is effected by the immediate and sovereign interposition of God. The *old man* has his origin in the *one*; the *new man* his in the *other*. Now if we admit that the new man owes his existence to the second or spiritual birth, can we, according to the rules of sound interpretation, do otherwise than admit that the *old man* owes his existence to the first or natural birth? But this is to admit all that we plead for, namely, that men derive their sinfulness from their birth, or, in other words, that they are born sinners. Nor let it be supposed that

we are carried by this admission beyond the point heretofore contended for, namely, the certainty of sin from this source, not its coetaneous existence with the fact of man's birth. Such a coetaneous existence may or may not be, without affecting the nature of our argument. Men sin as soon as they are moral agents, and that universally, let their moral agency commence when it may; and this result is made certain by the law of propagation. This, we believe, our Lord plainly teaches in the passage under consideration, and all that he teaches, so far as natural generation is concerned.

The celebrated John Taylor, of Norwich, has given a different interpretation of these words in his treatise on original sin. After repeating the words, "*That which is born of the flesh, is flesh,*" his gloss is, "That which is born by natural descent and propagation, *is a man*, consisting of body and soul, or the mere constitution and powers of a man in their natural state. But President Edwards has shown with great force of argument, that such an interpretation is utterly inadmissible, because at war with the established use of the terms *flesh* and *spirit*, when set in opposition to each other in the New Testament, and when employed on the subject of the requisite qualifications for salvation. And besides, he might have said, if he does not say it, that such an interpretation supplies no reason for the necessity of the new birth. If men are not sinners by nature or born sinners, in the sense we have explained, but only born moral agents, it will not follow that they need a new birth unto righteousness; they may be righteous already, and righteous from the beginning, for aught that appears from Christ's declaration. Nay, but, says the Socinian, they must acquire a character, and a holy character, before they can enter into the kingdom of God. Very true. But who knows that this character is not already acquired, and acquired as early as they commenced their moral agency?

Christ, by the supposition, says nothing to the contrary; and, of course, supplies no reason which makes it necessary for every man to be born of the Holy Spirit. And, farther, if the mere acquisition of a character not before possessed constitutes a new birth, are not sinners born again when they commence a course of sin? In their natural birth they commenced moral agents, but without a character either as then existing, or as *provided for* or *secured* by this birth. When they began to sin, they acquired a moral character which was a second birth; they were then regenerated, though not by the Holy Spirit.

But the Scripture knows nothing of such a regeneration, and for this plain reason: it considers the first birth as involving sinful character, either at the moment of birth or as its unfailing result afterwards.

Other glosses of this passage have been attempted, but none, I am persuaded, will abide the test of examination, but that which we have advocated, and which clearly and decisively supports the doctrine of *native depravity*.

The language of the apostle, Galatians iv. 29, may be referred to, as upholding the same *sentiment*: "But as then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, *even so it is now*." He that was born after the flesh, it is evident from the connection, was Ishmael, born, as Rosenmuller says, according to the common course of nature. He persecuted Isaac, who was a child of promise, and born after the *Spirit*, or after the Divine power, singularly manifested in his birth. "*Even so*," says the Apostle, "*it is now*." There are those who are born after the flesh, and who persecute those that are born after the Spirit. But *who* are *these* that are born after the flesh? They are evidently *Jews*, who are the children of Abraham by natural descent, but who stand in no other relation to him, having



never been born of the Spirit. They persecute those who, as true believers, are Abraham's seed, and who, as Isaac was, are born after another and extraordinary manner; that is to say, are born of the Spirit. Here, then, are two births spoken of: *one* as natural and common, pertaining to the Jews in the apostle's time—another as *spiritual*, pertaining to true believers, and peculiar to them. The first is a birth unto sin, because it involves the malignant and persecuting spirit; the second is a birth unto righteousness, because it is effected by the Holy Ghost, the author of a spiritual nature in all true believers, and because, too, by the fruits of righteousness which proceed from it, it awakens the hostility of the carnally minded, or of those who are born after the flesh. The contrast thus exhibited between the unbelieving Jews and the true believers in Christ, is a contrast of moral character, and this character is represented as the result of their different and respective births—arising, in the one case, from being *born after the flesh*, in the other from *being born after the Spirit*. Most certainly, if the character of true Christians is here traced to their *spiritual* birth, the character of the unbelieving Jews is traced to their *natural* birth. *They are born after the flesh*, and therefore they *will do the works of the flesh*. Another passage which supports the same doctrine, is found in Ephesians ii. 3: "Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others."

"Children of wrath," says an able critic, "are men who deserve wrath." But why do they deserve it? Because they are children of disobedience. That the Ephesians sustained this character to a wide and fearful extent antecedent to their conversion, the apostle's account fully shows. They had their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, and fulfilled the desires of the flesh

and of the mind. They were hateful, and hating one another. But how came they to be of this odious character? Was it occasioned by example, or did they grow into it by custom? Did the enemy of all righteousness stimulate them to their evil deeds? No doubt these causes had their influence in *forming* and finishing their depraved character. But there was another and deeper cause, and one which laid the foundation for these causes to operate; and this the Apostle assigns, when he says that they "were by *nature* children of wrath, even as others."

By *nature*, I understand here, *by birth*. So the original word *φύσει* is used by the Apostles, Galatians, ii. 15: We who are Jews by *nature*, and not sinners of the Gentiles: that is, we who are born Jews. This is the original and primary meaning of the term according to Schleusner, and so employed by the best writers, several examples of which he has given us. It may also be remarked, that when this word is used by *metonymy*, it bears a sense strongly analogous to this, and signifies something which has its origin in *generation* or *birth*; and though it has sometimes a still wider import, it seems always to have respect to the natural state of things. But that we have given the true interpretation of the word in the passage before us, we think is evident from several circumstances. It upholds a doctrine which the Apostle in various forms teaches elsewhere. It is agreeable to his own use of the word in other places, and especially in that of Galatians ii. 15. It makes him assign an appropriate reason for that depravity of manners which characterized the Ephesians antecedent to their conversion; since they were by nature inclined to that which was evil, born after the flesh, it was to be looked for that they would indulge in the lusts of the flesh.

Besides, if this be not the meaning of the Apostle, to what purpose does he say that they were, *by nature*,

children of wrath? Their wickedness he had described before, and if he had no intention of tracing it to its source, why did he introduce the word *nature* at all? Having mentioned their abominable deeds, we might rather have expected him simply to declare that they were children of wrath, and not that they were such by *nature*.

Some have supposed by *nature* in this place, that the Apostle intended nothing more than *custom* or *use*; making him to say that the Ephesians had indulged in all manner of evil, and were by custom and use the children of wrath even as others. But this is too far-fetched, and I may add, too absurd, to be seriously entertained. It was probably resorted to only as an escape from *native* or *hereditary* depravity. But there is no escape unless by a perversion of terms, unworthy of impartial inquiry and sober criticism. For allow the Apostle to say, as his words most obviously import, that men are, *by nature*, children of wrath, and there is no avoiding the conclusion that he traces their depravity to their *birth*, as its certain and prolific source.

Let me for a moment call your attention to 1 Corinthians, ii. 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Who is intended here by the *natural* man? All but Pelagians, and men of Pelagian cast, will admit that it is the *unrenewed* man, in opposition to one that is renewed, and who is sometimes called *spiritual* because regenerated or born of the Spirit. The *natural* man and the *spiritual* man are contrasted by the Apostle in this very connection, which is sufficient evidence that by the *natural* man he intended the *unrenewed* man or man as he is *by nature*, antecedent to the *sanctifying grace* of God. The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit, he knoweth

them not, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ; but the spiritual man judgeth all things. Being enlightened from above, he can discern the things of the Spirit so as no *natural* man can discern them ; their intrinsic beauty and glory beam upon his eye, and call forth the purest and warmest feelings of his heart. This constitutes a radical and wide distinction between the *natural* and *spiritual* man—a distinction which holds not only between the *renewed* man and the *sensualist*, but equally between the *renewed* man and the *unrenewed*, however *intellectual*, *moral* or *refined* the latter may be. To this no Calvinist will object ; and with the Pelagian we have at present no controversy. I ask, then, what is the import of the term *natural* as here applied to the unrenewed man, or man as he is by nature ? It will doubtless be conceded that it marks in him a state of deep and entire depravity, and that from the commencement of his moral existence. But is this all ? Does it not point us to the source of this depravity in the very *nature* he received at his birth ? It cannot for a moment be denied that he received a nature then, both *physical* and *moral*, whether all the powers and susceptibilities of it were developed at once or not ; nor can it be questioned that this nature laid a foundation both for the existence and the character of his moral acts. The fact, therefore, must be as the Apostle's words here seem to intimate, that man's aversion to spiritual things, nay, his blindness to their intrinsic beauty and excellence, is attributable to the nature he received at his birth, and consequently that he is, as the Apostle teaches elsewhere, *by nature* a sinner or a child of wrath.

Nor will it avail, by way of objection, to say that the original word here translated *natural* is  $\psi\chi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$  and not  $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$ , the more common and appropriate term for that which is *natural*—for  $\psi\chi\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$  itself, like  $\psi\chi\eta$ , from which

it is derived, has often a meaning sufficiently broad to cover the *intellectual* and *moral*, as well as the animal part of man, and according to Schleusner, is so employed in the passage before us. Besides, if *ψυχικός* were more directly and properly descriptive of the animal part of man, it is not supposed by my opponents to be confined to his animal part, but like *σαρκ* and *σάρκα* to be comprehensive of the whole man, and designed to mark his moral depravity, consist in what it may—whether in indulgence of animal appetite, or in any of the selfish and malignant passions. But the point to be looked at is, is man *ψυχικός* by nature? Was he born such? Every animal is surely born, whether *rational* or *irrational*; everything which has a soul, and which lives by breathing, as the original word signifies, came into being with all its natural powers and propensities through the medium of birth. What more appropriate term, then, could the Apostle have used than he has used, to express the depravity of man, and to indicate that this depravity is original or derived from his birth?

It might be easy to show, that such phrases as the *old man*, contrasted with the *new man*—the *law of sin*, which is in the members, with the *law of the spirit of life*, in Christ Jesus—the *mind of the flesh*, with the *mind of the spirit*—and other kindred forms of expression, derive a peculiar significancy and force, from the *fact* of man's *inborn* or *native depravity*. This fact supposed, and we see why these terms are employed, and whence they become so full of import on the pages of Revelation. But without *this*, it is not easy to see how they came into use, and by what means they acquired that *significancy* which every sound interpreter gives them. But our limits will not allow us to go into a particular illustration. We conclude our examination of Scripture testimony on the subject of man's *native depravity*, by refer-

ring to some passages which fairly presuppose this, though they do not distinctly assert it.

This doctrine is involved in the proposition, that *like begets like*, and the Scripture recognizes the truth of this proposition in the following passages: 1 John v. 1. "Every one that loveth *him* that *begat*, loveth him also that is *begotten* of him." Why so? How does this appear to be a natural and just consequence? Because, *like begets like*. This is a universal law; and therefore he who is begotten of God is like God. Consequently, if we love the *former* we shall love the *latter* also. The propriety and force of this language depends wholly on the admitted fact of *like father like son*. See also the second chapter of this epistle, verse twenty-ninth. "If ye know that *he* is righteous (in God), ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is *born of him*." How should they know this, but upon the supposition that he who is *begotten* will bear the image of him who *begat*, and *vice versa*? As if the Apostle had said, ye may know who the righteous man is *born of*, from the very fact of his being righteous. His character is proof of his origin—that he was born of God. To the same effect is chapter third, verse ninth: "Whosoever is *born of God* cannot commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." But why cannot he who is born of God commit sin? Because a holy disposition is imparted to him by this new and heavenly birth. He is made to resemble God in his moral *feelings* and *character*. So also, chapter fourth, verse seventh: "Let us love one another, for every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." But how does it appear that every one that loveth is *born of God*? Because God himself is love, and he that is born of him must be like him, if it be true, as the Apostle seemed to suppose, that *like begets like*, in things *spiritual* as well as in things *natural*.

But to all this it may be said, that mere moral resemblance of one person to another, may lay the foundation for saying that one is the child of the other, and that on this principle it is men are sometimes called the children of God, and sometimes the children of the devil, without any reference being had to the derivation of this resemblance. We cheerfully grant it. But this makes nothing against the argument, that derivation by birth, whether *natural* or *spiritual*, is regarded in the Bible as a grand source of moral likeness. If mere resemblance calls up the relation supposed between a parent and his offspring, as we admit is sometimes the case, it is only because it is a known fact, that where this relation actually exists the resemblance is to be looked for, as a matter of course.

In short, there could be no propriety in saying that men are the children of God, or the children of the devil, on the ground of resemblance, were it not an admitted fact that where the relation of parent and child is actually found, there strong points of resemblance are supposed to be found also; in other words, that *like begets like*. Lay this supposition out of view, and the figure has no foundation in nature, nor out of it.

We have now finished our reference to the Scriptures, on the subject of *like begetting like*, and more especially as this proposition stands connected with the doctrine of man's native depravity.

That the proof exhibited will be found satisfactory to all can hardly be expected; but that it is both clear and abundant I have, for myself, no sort of doubt. And here I should rest, without adding a word more, were it not that there are some popular objections, to which I wish to make a brief reply.



## LECTURE XII.

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### ON NATIVE DEPRAVITY.

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#### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

*Objection First.* To suppose that sin is propagated through the medium of birth or that man is born a sinner, is inconsistent with the very nature of sin. *Sin* is an act, and can an act be born? It is easy to conceive that a *man* may be born, with all the elements of his being; but not his *acts*, and especially his *free, moral* acts. This objection, as old as *Socinus*, and perhaps as *Pelagius* himself, we have always regarded as a mere quibble, intended chiefly for the purpose of throwing dust into the eyes. It is either a play upon the word *born*, or a total misconception of the meaning of that word. It goes upon the principle that *nothing* can be born which is not *coeval* with birth, and *nothing* in which the subject is not altogether passive. But I ask, where do we learn that nothing can be born with us, which is not coeval with birth? We have shown, in preceding observations, that such a limitation of the phrase is not authorized by the current use of language in the Bible, or elsewhere. On the contrary, that whatever is provided for in our birth, and as a natural and unfailing consequence flows from it, may justly be said to be *born*, and born with us. And let me here add, that in conformity with this extended

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use of the term, we often say of one man, that he is *born a prince*, and of another, that he is *born a beggar*—because here is a state or condition provided for, by the very fact of *being born*, and by the circumstances in which this event takes place. In the one case, a man is born to dignity and honor; in the other, to poverty and disgrace. Both *inherit* from their immediate progenitors, yet the inheritance is widely different. But who supposes that the man born a beggar, begins to beg as soon as he is born? or that the man born a prince, comes at once into all the fullness and splendor of his fortune? It is plain we never suppose this; yet we do suppose that their birth deeply affects their condition, and virtually makes them what they finally are. When we see a man full of noble daring on the one hand, or characterized by a weak and pusillanimous spirit on the other, we say he has a good right to it—it comes to him by inheritance—his father had the same spirit before him; or in other words, he was *born courageous*, or *born a coward*, as the case may be. Nobody understands us to say that these traits were developed at the moment of birth, but that birth laid a foundation for them, on the principle that *like begets like*. In the same manner we understand the common adage, "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*;" and the phrase, *this man was born a thief*, and *that a villain*. In all such cases, we mean that certain traits of mind and of character are *natural* to those who possess them, and came to them by *descent*. To suppose, therefore, with the objector, that nothing is born or inherited by descent, but what is coeval with birth, is entirely to mistake the nature of the subject, and to misinterpret the language sanctioned by long and unquestionable usage.

As to the second part of the difficulty made by this objection, to wit; that an act cannot be born, because that only which is *passive* can be the subject of such a predicate, this will easily be disposed of, especially with

those who advocate the doctrine of *active* regeneration. If to be born of the Word and of the Spirit does not exclude our *activity*, why should it be thought that to be *born of the flesh* excludes it? Is there no analogy in these cases? or is it so, indeed, that everything pertaining to the *natural* birth comes to us without our agency, and even excludes it; while in the *spiritual* birth, the order of things is entirely reversed, and our own agency here becomes the principal thing? If the fact be so, I should like to see the proof of it, and know by what secret and wonder-working power it is, that words, kindred in their form, change, all at once, and so radically, their obvious and legitimate import. Till I am farther enlightened on the subject, I shall be disposed to think that such an arbitrary use of terms looks more like catering for a system, than honestly expounding the Word of God, or even the language of common life.

Doubtless there is a *difference* between the two births—their causes are different, and their results are different. They are not brought about by the same means, but they are expressed by the same terms; nor is it to be doubted that one is strongly analogous to the other. They both involve moral character, if not as *immediately*, yet just as *certainly*." For that which is born of the *flesh* is *flesh*, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And if they involve *moral character*, why not *moral acts*, either at the moment when birth takes place, or at a subsequent period. Were it proved that infants are moral agents as soon as they are born, it would follow, from Christ's words, that their sin is coeval with their birth, and that to be born a *human being* and *born a sinner* could not be separated, either in point of time or in point of fact. Let this be as it may, however, Christ's language covers the fact that men are born sinners; because if they do not sin the moment they are born, their birth makes their sin certain, in the natural order of things,

and that as soon as their moral agency commences. In their birth they receive a constitution, and are placed in circumstances which infallibly issue in sin. Who can deny this? But this admitted, and all is granted that we contend for, to wit, that men are born to sin as surely as they are born to be moral agents. They will act morally as soon as the powers of their moral being permit, and the character of their acts will be decided by their birth; "for they are the degenerate plants of a strange vine," to borrow the expression of one of our opponents.

But it may be said, this is to suppose that their sin originates in a cause out of their control, and anterior to their volition. And what if it does? How is this to be avoided? unless we resort to one of two absurdities, either that their sin has no cause, notwithstanding the uniformity and certainty of its occurrence, or that it was caused by some act of their own which was neither sinful nor voluntary; and yet, to suppose such an act, if it were not absurd in itself, would be to suppose something which is as much beyond the control of the mind, as the motion of a comet or the rising and setting of the stars. The truth is, there is no avoiding the stubborn fact, that sin has a cause, unless we deny moral causation altogether, and betake ourselves to the self-determining power of the will. But if we allow sin to have a cause, where can it lie, but in our own powers and susceptibilities, and in the objects which excite them? We may say, indeed, that God is the cause, and *that* by his immediate and positive efficiency; but then neither the Bible nor sound philosophy will sustain the position. But,

*Secondly*, If sin is propagated through the medium of our birth, how comes it to pass that the Christian virtues are not propagated by the same law? Nobody pretends that faith and repentance, and other Christian graces, are transmitted by birth. Very true; and there is good reason for it—facts are not *for* but *against* such an opin-

ion. Besides, let me say that those who make this objection are either ignorant of the great law of propagation, or have not carefully adverted to its leading principles. Its object is to preserve the *identity* of the *species*, not to transmit individual peculiarities. Whatever is *common* to the race, and forms in it a *permanent* characteristic, is transmitted from one generation to another; not *what* is adventitious, *what* occurs as the result of education, or as the effect of some new and extraordinary cause. We expect, therefore, to see in the offspring the same number of limbs, and the same general features, as distinguished the parent, provided these are common characteristics of the race, and not the result of some adventitious cause. But we do not expect to see individual peculiarities, and especially those which are not constitutional; because facts tell us these are not transmitted to posterity.

Now faith and repentance, and other Christian virtues, come not from *nature*, but from grace; they are neither common nor *permanent* characteristics of the species, but *individual peculiarities*, superinduced by a peculiar and extraordinary cause. To suppose them propagated, therefore, would be to violate the order of nature, and intrench upon the known laws of propagation, so clearly defined and so steadily pursued among all the animal and vegetable tribes. So far, then, is the *fact* alleged in the objection, from being an argument against the doctrine of *native* depravity, it is a confirmation of it, since it shows the case in all respects to be, as we might justly expect on the supposition that the doctrine is true.

*Third.* Again, it is thought to be an appalling objection to the doctrine of *transmitted depravity*, that they who defend it fail in their analogies as often as they compare this transmission with other instances of propagated qualities; for the latter have nothing of the *uniformity* and *extent* which is assigned to original and propagated sin.

That many qualities which appear to be propagated from father to son, are not as universal as the whole human family, we must certainly admit. We readily grant that a *flat nose*, a *curled pate*, and a *black skin*, though evidently propagated, are not as universal as *head and shoulders*, eyes and ears; but does this furnish the least argument that the latter characteristics are not propagated also, and propagated by descent? What has *uniformity* or *extent* to do in this matter, provided the properties and qualities in question have the appropriate marks or signatures of propagation, showing that they are the product of nature, not of art or circumstance? The various instincts, tastes and dispositions, which we remark among animals or among men, and which, so far as we can judge, are *hereditary*, may very strikingly represent that disposition to moral evil so characteristic of mankind, though it were admitted that the latter is of wider universality than any of the former. This difference of extent supplies not the shadow of an objection against the justness and the fairness of the analogy.

But the advocates for transmitted depravity do not confine their analogies to qualities limited to a part of the race, but embrace in their comparison qualities as universal as the species. They contend that sin is as natural to man as to eat or to drink, to be hungry or thirsty; that his moral character is as truly derived from his birth—that character, we mean, which is original and primary—as the powers of his moral being, his reason, conscience, or any other faculty. The objection, therefore, of the want of *uniformity* and *extent* in the analogies appealed to in favor of hereditary sin, is, in every point of view, impertinent, and without avail.

*Fourth.* Some have found great difficulty in this doctrine, because, say they, according to its advocates, it is made to depend, not on our immediate ancestor, but upon our connection with Adam.

I cannot but suspect some mistake here. For no enlightened advocate for the doctrine in question would be apt to say that sin was *hereditary*, and yet *not hereditary*; that it comes to all by generation or natural descent, and yet that natural descent has nothing to do with it, as surely it cannot have, if the depravity of the child is no way connected with the depravity of the parent from whom he has descended. The truth unquestionably is, that we are all *connected* with Adam, and that his one offence brought *sin* upon us all; "for by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners." But how are we *connected* with him, unless by the fact of our being his posterity—his natural descendants? But can we be his descendants, without descending from him through the medium of intervening generations, and consequently without derivation from our immediate parents, one of those generations? It must be strange, therefore, to say that our depravity depends on our connection with Adam, but not on our immediate ancestor, when it obviously depends on both; seeing our very connection with Adam depends on the relation we hold to our immediate ancestor, as one of his descendants. But if any man has been incautious or absurd enough to make the statement objected to, the doctrine of *native* depravity itself ought not to be drawn into question in consequence of it. It needs no such statement for its defence, nor is it in the remotest degree connected with any such view of the case.

*Fifth.* Another objection to this doctrine is found in the language of those who describe the depravity of our nature as something *uniform* and *invariable* in all circumstances, ages and individuals, implying, as the objector supposes, that this depravity is *equal* in all cases, and strictly *immutable*, being incapable either of addition or diminution. But the whole difficulty here lies in giving an extent of meaning to the terms *uniform* and

*invariable*, which nobody ever dreamed of or imagined but the objector himself. Were I to say that *reason* or *conscience*, or *natural* affection, is a *uniform* and *invariable* characteristic of man, found in all circumstances, ages and individuals, where the proper period has arrived for its development, would any person understand me to assert that *reason*, or *conscience* or *affection*, was precisely the same thing in all men, at all times and in all circumstances, so that no diversity whatever could exist as to modification or extent? Nothing, surely, could be more strained or absurd than such a construction of my words.

*Objection sixth.* We are told, says an objector, that *original sin* is the cause and ground of all *actual sin*; and yet that original sin is *equal*, *uniform* and *invariable*, in all. Of course that all are equally depraved, and under like temptations must exhibit the very same degree of wickedness, a thing which every one knows is contrary to fact. This is another appalling objection; but the whole force of it depends upon the strained interpretation put upon the words *equal*, *uniform* and *invariable*. Give them the import which, in all such connections, they are manifestly designed to have, and no such absurd or contradictory consequence as the objection contemplates will ever follow. Natural affection, in a very important sense of the term, is *uniform* and *invariable*—that is, it belongs to all as a constitutional principle, provided for in the very elements of their being; but it does not always exist with the same strength or intensity. It is, moreover, equally true of all, so that there is an equality in men in this respect, and not a disparity. Nobody contends that it has exactly the same force in all, and at all times; nor is there a man on earth, I presume, that contends that original sin has the same force in all, and at all times, if by original sin be meant depravity of heart, and depravity by nature. It is true that men are

equally destitute of original righteousness. Here there is no disparity ; but as to their readiness and eagerness to sin, and to sin in a gross and high-handed manner, there is undoubtedly a difference, which the abettor of original sin may as cheerfully and frankly admit as his opponent.

*Seventh.* We are asked, too, and with an air of triumph, " If Adam's sin be propagated in the way of natural generation, why were not his *other sins*, (as well as his first one,) committed before the procreation of his children, propagated to his descendants? and so his penitence and pardon in like manner ?

Whether such a question was put from oversight or design, it may be hard to say ; but that the point in debate is overlooked is most certain. The question in dispute is, not whether a single act, or more acts than one, are transmitted by propagation, but whether a *similar nature*, as the cause of similar acts, is so transmitted ? When we speak of reason or conscience, as born with a man, or propagated from father to son, we have no reference to *this* or *that* particular act of reason or conscience, but to the principles from which such acts flow, and by consequence to the acts themselves, *Reason* or *conscience*, we say, is propagated, because involved in that very constitution which appertains to a rational and moral being, and which every man derives from his birth ; and having this constitution he is sure to develop it, not in another's acts but his own, and in such acts as correspond to the powers of reason and conscience which he has received. In like manner, those who believe that sin is propagated, do not believe that this or that sin, considered as the personal act of another, is propagated, but only a moral nature, so circumstanced as to secure a sinful conduct in those to whom this nature appertains.

With this explanation of the true nature of the case, it will be easily seen that the objection implied in the



above question has no foundation, but in the abuse of terms.

*Eighth.* And the same may be said of another objection, taken from the same author, namely : " If propagation be the ground of transmitting sin, then why are not all the sins of all our ancestors, from Adam down to ourselves, brought down upon us, and propagated to us ?" Sure enough. But here the mistake is the same as before ; *individual acts* are supposed to be propagated from one person to another, and not constitutional principles with their attendant circumstances, from which *like* or *similar* acts flow. A nature may be transmitted by propagation, along with the being who inherits it ; but not the personal act of one, so as to become the personal act of another. This would be to confound all notions of personal distinction, and individual responsibility. No defender of the doctrine of *native* or *hereditary* depravity, has occasion to resort to any such absurdity. And to suppose that he has, is to misinterpret the doctrine, and to apply to it language which it neither justifies nor employs.



## LECTURE XIII.

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### EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

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WHETHER Christ died for *all* men, or for a *part* only ? is a question which has been much agitated, since the Reformation, though, according to Milner, the Church, from the earliest ages, rested in the opinion that Christ *died for all*. He does not except even Augustine, whom Prosper, his admirer and follower, and a strict Predestinarian, represents as maintaining that Christ gave himself a ransom for all ;\* so far, at least, as to make provision for their salvation, by removing an impediment which would otherwise have proved fatal. The early Christians seemed to go upon the principle, that as salvation was indiscriminately tendered to all, it must have been provided for all, and thus made *physically possible* to all, where the Gospel comes ; otherwise, the Deity would be represented as tendering *that* to his creatures which was in no sense within their reach, and which they could not possibly attain, whatever might be their dispositions.

Among those who leaned strongly to what are called the doctrines of grace, the maxim was adopted, “ *That Christ’s death was sufficient for all, and efficient for the elect.*” By which they seem to have intended, that while Christ’s

death opened the door for the salvation of all, so far as an expiatory sacrifice was concerned, it was *designed*, and by the sovereign grace of God, made *effectual*, to the salvation of the elect. Their belief was, that Christ died *intentionally* to save those who were given to him in the covenant of redemption; but it does not appear that they supposed his death, considered merely as an *expiatory offering*, had any virtue in it, in relation to the elect, which it had not in relation to the rest of mankind. With respect to the *ultimate design* of this sacrifice, or the application which God would make of it, they doubtless supposed there was a difference; but in the *sacrifice itself*, or in its *immediate end*, the *demonstration of God's righteousness*, they could see no difference. In this view, it was precisely the same thing, as it stood related to the *elect* and to the *non-elect*. The sacrificial service was one and the same, appointed by the same authority, and for the same immediate purpose, and performed by the same glorious Personage, at the very same time. It wanted nothing to constitute it a true and perfect sacrifice for sin, as it stood related to the whole world; it was but this true and perfect sacrifice, as it stood related to the elect. Any other view would have overturned its sufficiency for all mankind; for it was not the sufficiency of Christ *to be* a sacrifice, but his sufficiency *as a sacrifice* for the whole world, that they maintained. And in perfect accordance with this, they held that this most perfect sacrifice was *efficient* for the elect. But how was it *efficient*? Not by its having in it anything in regard to the *elect* which it had not in regard to others; for, *intrinsically* considered, it was the same to both, *a true and perfect sacrifice for sin*; but it was the purpose of God, in appointing it, that it should issue in the salvation of his chosen. This was the use he intended to make of it; nay, it was a part of the covenant of redemption, that if the Mediator performed the sacrificial service required,

he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. There was, therefore, an infallible connection between the death of Christ and the salvation of his people ; and, of course, his death *was efficient* in procuring their salvation, it being the great medium through which the saving mercy of God flowed, and connected both by the purpose and promise of God with the bestowment of that mercy.

But even all this does not suppose that the death of Christ, considered simply as a *sacrifice for sin*, had anything in it peculiar to the elect, or that in and of itself it did anything for them which it did not do for the rest of mankind. The intention of God, as to its application, or the use he designed to make of it, is a thing perfectly distinct from the sacrifice itself, and so considered, as we believe, by the Church antecedent to the Reformation. In no other way, can we see, how their language is either *intelligible* or *consistent*.

Whether the *Reformers*, as they are called, were exactly of one mind on this subject, is not quite so certain. But that *Luther, Melancthon, Osiander, Brentius, Ecolampadius, Zwinglius* and *Bucer*, held the doctrine of a general atonement, there is no reason to doubt. We might infer it from their Confession at *Marpurge*, signed A. D. 1529, as the expressions they employ on this subject are of a comprehensive character, and best agree with this sentiment. From their subsequent writings, however, it is manifest that these men, and the German Reformers generally, embraced the doctrine of a *universal propitiation*. Thus, also, it was with their immediate successors, as the language of the *Psalgrave Confession* testifies. This Confession is entitled, "A Full Declaration of the Faith and Ceremonies professed in the dominions of the most illustrious and noble Prince Frederick V., Prince Elector Palatine." It was translated by John Rolte, and published in London, A. D. 1614.

“Of the power and death of Christ, believe we,” say these German Christians, that the death of Christ (whilst he being not a bare man, but the Son of God, died,) is *a full, all-sufficient payment, not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world*; and that he by his death hath purchased not only forgiveness of sins, but also the new birth by the Holy Ghost, and lastly everlasting life.” But we believe therewith, that no man shall be made partaker of such a benefit, but only he that believeth on him. For the Scripture is plain where it saith, “*He that believeth not shall be damned.*”

It would be unnecessary to take up your time to show that the Lutheran divines, with scarcely a single exception, from that period to the present, have declared in favor of a universal atonement. It could scarcely be otherwise when we consider the great reverence in which they held their distinguished leader, who, on various occasions, expressed himself most decidedly upon this subject. To give but a single instance. While speaking of the blood of Christ, the inestimable price paid for our redemption, (in his commentary on 1 Peter, i. 18,) he remarks that no understanding or reason of man can comprehend it: so valuable was it, “that a single drop of this most innocent and precious blood was abundantly sufficient for the sins of the whole world. But it pleased the Father so largely to bestow his grace upon us, and to make such abundant provision for our salvation, that he willed that Christ his Son should pour forth all his blood, and at the same time to give this whole treasure to us.”

We know what the opinion of the Church of England was, by the language of her thirty-first article, which is in these words: “The offering of Christ once made, is that *perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual*; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone;”

and with this agree the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, in the thirty-seventh question, which state that "Christ bore, both in body and mind, the weight of the wrath of God, for the sins of *all mankind*," to the end that by his sufferings as a propitiatory sacrifice, he might redeem our bodies and souls from eternal damnation, and acquire for us the grace of God, justification and eternal life."

We are well aware that many who have expounded this catechism, have adopted more limited views; and that towards the close of the sixteenth century, there was not a little zeal displayed, in some of the Reformed Churches, in Germany and Holland, and other parts of Europe, in defence of what was called particular redemption. Yet, in the Synod of Dort, there were many able advocates for the doctrine that *Christ died for all*, in the only sense in which it is contended for now, by that part of the Calvinistic school who plead for a *general propitiation*. The delegates from England, *Hesse* and *Bremen*, were explicit in their declaration to this effect. But all were not of the same mind; and, therefore, though they agreed upon a *form of words*, under which every man might take shelter, still it wears the appearance of a compromise, and is not sufficiently definite to satisfy the rigid inquirer.

But some may be curious to know in what light this subject was viewed by *Calvin*, a man who, from the *extent* of his *erudition*, and the *vigor* of his faculties, exerted a mighty influence over his cotemporaries, and the generations which succeeded him. Seldom, indeed, has the world seen such a man. Fearless, as he was able, he examined every subject with care, and penetrated farther into the great doctrines of the Gospel, probably, than any other divine of that or of preceding ages. What did *he* think of the doctrine of atonement? Did he consider it in the light of a universal provision for

the whole human race, or did he suppose it restricted in its very nature to the elect? In his *Institutes*, which he wrote in early life, and which display an astonishing measure both of talent and research, some have supposed that he favored the doctrine of a particular or limited atonement. The truth, however, is, so far as I can judge, that he carefully avoids committing himself on this point, and uses language on all occasions of such a general and indeterminate character, that it is not easy to discover what were his real sentiments. The probability is, that the subject had not then been much agitated, and that he thought it enough to keep to the language which was generally adopted by the Church. He often asserts that the death of Christ was a full and perfect sacrifice for sin—that it *takes away* sin—that he died for *us*—and that we are *purged by his blood*; but he does not teach that any man's sins are put away until he believes, but he plainly teaches the contrary. Having occasion to quote these words of the Apostle, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," he remarks, "Here Paul celebrates the grace of God, because he has given the price of our redemption in the death of Christ; and then enjoins us to betake ourselves to his blood, that we may obtain righteousness, and may stand secure before the judgment of God." But why betake ourselves to his blood, that we may obtain righteousness or justification, if his death, considered simply as a sin-offering, actually took away our sin, and reconciled us to God? For myself, I have no doubt that he considered the *sprinkling* of Christ's blood as essential to a *real* and *effective* propitiation as the shedding of it. *His blood shed* was the meritorious cause of our reconciliation, or the grand means by which it was effected; but this effect was never actually produced but in cases where his blood

was sprinkled or applied, and that this blood is applied in no case antecedent to faith, and without faith. His doctrine, then, appears to me to be this: That Christ's death was the only full and perfect sacrifice for sin; that as such, it laid the foundation for God to be propitious to a world of sinners, even the whole human family; but that it actually reconciled him to none, so as to take away their sin and entitle them to life, till they repented and believed; but that to all such there is an *actual propitiation*, an *effective reconciliation* or at-one-ment, because by faith they lay their hands upon the head of the bleeding victim, and his blood is sprinkled upon them or applied to their souls. But whatever might have been his opinions in early life, his commentaries, which were the labors of his riper years, demonstrate in the most unequivocal manner that he received and taught the doctrine of a *general* or *universal* atonement. This is distinctly asserted by Dr. Watts, and several striking examples of his interpretation given. But having examined for myself, I am prepared to say that he takes the ground of an universal atonement in almost every controverted text on this subject in the New Testament. Hear him on Matthew xxvi. 28: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for *many* for the remission of sins." "Under the name of *many*," says Calvin, "he designates not a part of the world only, but the whole human race. For he opposes many to one, as if he should say he would be the Redeemer, not of one man, but would suffer death that he might liberate many from the guilt of the curse. Nor is it to be doubted that Christ, in addressing the few, designed to make his doctrine common to the many. Nevertheless, it is at the same time to be noted, that in distinctly addressing his disciples in Luke, he exhorts all the faithful to appropriate the shedding of his blood to their own use. While, therefore, we approach the sacred table, not



only this general thought should come into the mind, *that the world is redeemed by Christ's blood*, but that every one for himself should reckon his own sins to be expiated." He expounds John viii. 16 in accordance with the same views. "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*" By the *world*, according to him, we are to understand "*genus humanum*," the human race collectively, and not the elect as a distinct portion of the world. God hath *affixed*, saith he, a *mark of universality* to his words on this occasion, "both that he might invite all promiscuously to the participation of life, and that he might cut off excuse to the unbelieving;" and this universality is indicated, he tells us, not only by the term *whosoever*, but by the term *world*. "For though God finds nothing in the world worthy of his favor, nevertheless he shows himself *propitious to the whole world*, since he calls all men without exception to *faith* in Christ, which is nothing else than an entrance into life."

His remarks on 1 Corinthians viii. 11, 12, are still more decisive. "And through thy knowledge shall thy *weak brother perish for whom Christ died.*" Here the question is, what is meant by the weak brother *perishing*? Calvin's paraphrase is, "If the soul of every weak person was the purchaser of the blood of Christ, he that for the sake of a little meat plunges his *brother again into death* who was *redeemed by Christ*, shows at how mean a rate he esteems the blood of Christ." His observations on Hebrews x. 26, are of the same decisive character. Paul declares "*that if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*" This Calvin interpreted of those who openly apostatize from the truth and renounce their Christian profession—and to such, he says, there is no more a *sacrifice* for sins, because they have departed from the *of Christ* and treated it with *sacrilegious contem*

to sinners of any other description, even to lapsed Christians "Christ daily offers himself, so that no other sacrifice need to be sought for the expiation of their sins."

It is obvious that Calvin considered *apostates* as standing in a different relation to the death of Christ from what they once did, and different from that of other sinners under the dispensation of the Gospel. That *once* his death might be regarded as a *sacrifice* for sin, available for them, but now it was otherwise; having despised him and being rejected of God, there remained to them neither this sacrifice nor any other, but only a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall consume the adversaries.

Again, on 1 John ii. 2, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Here," says Calvin, "a question is raised, how the sins of the whole world were atoned for? Some have said *that Christ suffered for the whole world sufficiently, but for the elect alone efficaciously. This is the common solution of the schools, and though I confess this is a truth, yet I do not think it agrees to this place.*"

See also on 2 Peter ii. 1, "There shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying *the Lord that bought them*, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Upon this, Calvin remarks, "Though Christ is denied in various ways, yet, in my opinion, Peter means the same thing here that Jude expresses, namely, that the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness. For Christ has redeemed us that he might have a people free from the defilements of the world, and devoted to holiness and innocence. Whoever, therefore, shake off the yoke and throw themselves into all licentiousness, are justly said to deny Christ, by whom they *were redeemed.*"

To the same purpose are his remarks on Jude, verse

fourth: "Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." "His meaning is," says Calvin, "that Christ is really denied when those who *were redeemed by his blood* again enslave themselves to the devil, and as far as in them lies, make that incomparable price vain and ineffectual."

It is but candid, however, to allow that in some passages where the word *all* is brought into question, this writer supposes that it signifies all of *every kind*, or all sorts, rather than all, *every one*. But this he might easily do and consistently maintain as the doctrine of the New Testament, that the death of Christ was a full and perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men absolutely. This doctrine he most certainly did maintain, as several of the extracts from his writings now presented clearly evince. We need not be afraid, therefore, that our *Calvinism* will be essentially marred by holding the doctrine of a *general propitiation*, unless we wish to be more Calvinistic than John Calvin himself. But as we should call no man master, upon earth, but examine for ourselves, and take our opinions from the living oracles, let us hear what the Scriptures say upon this subject.

To facilitate our inquiries, I propose to consider the truth of the following *positions*:

*First.* That the death of Christ was a true and proper sacrifice for sin.

*Second.* That though his death was of *vicarious import*, as were the ancient sin-offerings, yet it was not *strictly* vicarious.

*Third.* That this sacrifice bore such a relation to the *sins of men*, that a way was thereby opened for the restoration of the whole human family to the favor of God.

Should these propositions turn out to be true, we

shall be at no loss how to answer the question which stands at the head of this lecture.

*First.* As to the first position, that *Christ's death was a true and proper sacrifice for sin*, there will be no dispute, as this is common ground to all Calvinists, and to all, indeed, who do not virtually give up the doctrine of atonement. Still it may be well to remark that the language of Scripture, on this subject, is clear and precise. Christ is called the *Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*. He is said to have given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God. It is affirmed that he needed not, like the high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice daily, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for this he did once when he offered up himself. He is expressly called the *propitiation for our sins*, and God is said to have sent him into the world for the purpose of making propitiation, and of making it by his death. The whole system of Jewish sacrifices, as well as Patriarchal, were but types of his one great sacrifice when he offered up himself, and demonstrate his death to be a true and proper *expiatory offering*. But this is a point on all hands conceded.

*Second.* Was his death, then, of *vicarious import* simply? or was it strictly *vicarious*?

That it was of *vicarious import* cannot reasonably be denied, if we compare it with the legal sacrifices, or attend to the express language of Scripture on the subject.

The victims under the law were vicarious offerings; they suffered in the room and stead of the offerer, and thus far there was a *transfer*, not of *sin* or *guilt*, strictly speaking, but of its *penal effects*; suffering and death, only, were transferred, and this is what is meant by putting the iniquities of the sinner upon the head of the victim, and of the victim's bearing the iniquities of the sinner.

To suppose a literal transfer, either of *sin* or of *punishment*, would be to suppose something which is entirely unauthorized by the language of Scripture, and at the same time to involve the absurdity of making a man and even a beast guilty by proxy. *Sin*, *guilt*, *ill-desert*, are in the very nature of things *personal*; and *punishment* presupposes guilt, and guilt in the subject; neither the one nor the other is properly transferable. Or, to use the language of Magee: "*Guilt* and *punishment* cannot be conceived but with reference to *consciousness* which cannot be transferred."

While we would maintain, therefore, that the sufferings of Christ were of *vicarious import*, because he suffered in the room of sinners, and bore the indications of Divine wrath for their sakes, we cannot subscribe to the opinion that they were *strictly vicarious*, if by this is meant that the *sins* of those for whom he suffered, their *personal desert* and *their punishment* were literally transferred to him. We maintain the doctrine of substitution, but not such a substitution as implies a transfer of character, and consequently of *desert* and *punishment*. This we think to be impossible; and *unnecessary*, if not impossible. It was enough that there should be a transfer of *sufferings*, and *these*, not exactly in *kind*, *degree*, or *duration*, but in all their circumstances amounting to a full equivalent in their moral effect upon the government of God. We hold that Jesus died in the room of the guilty, that though innocent himself, he *was made sin for us*, or treated as a sinner on our account, and in our stead; that the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all, and that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, by suffering what was a full equivalent to the punishment due to our offences. But this, we think, is all the substitution which the Scriptures teach, all that the nature of things will admit, and all that was *necessary* to effect the same moral ends in the government of God *which*.

would have been effected by inflicting on the transgressor the penal sanctions of his law. This brings us to our third position.

*Third.* That the sacrifice of Christ bore such a relation to the *sins of men*—that a way was thereby opened for the restoration of the whole human family to the favor of God.

I say the *sins of men*, for it does not appear that his sacrifice bore any specific relation to the sins of the rebel angels. For them no sacrifice was appointed, but justice seized at once upon its victims, and thrust them down to hell, where they are reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. And but for a sacrifice, which did honor to the Divine Law, and rendered it consistent for a holy God to treat with rebellious man, it is not easy to see why the arm of justice was not uplifted to avenge its insulted rights, in the immediate and interminable punishment of our apostate race. Be this, however, as it may, it is an undeniable fact, that Jesus took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and was in all things made like unto his brethren of the human family. In that very nature in which the law of God had been broken and dishonored, did Jesus appear to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. But this, it will be said, it behoved him to do, if he were to expiate the sins of his people only, and if his death had not the remotest reference to the sins of the finally lost. Granted: but must it not also be allowed, that if he had intended to make provision for the whole human family by pouring out his blood, it behoved him neither to be nor to do anything more than he actually did? As a Person of infinite dignity, he accomplished that *very service* in that *very nature*, and in all *those circumstances of touching interest*, which alone would have been requisite had he intended to make atonement for the whole world absolutely. This is so

obvious as generally to be admitted. It is allowed on all hands, that he atoned for all sorts of persons, of all nations and all ages of the world; and that the sacrifice he offered was of sufficient value to have redeemed the whole human race. But how did he atone for any, but by obeying the law in *that very nature* in which they had disobeyed it, and by suffering in that *very nature*, a moral equivalent to *the evil* which they had deserved to suffer, as the just award of the same righteous law? But this nature, let it be remembered, is the common nature of man, and if by rendering a service in *this nature* would amount to an atonement for *one*, why not for *another*, and *another*, until the whole were included? That such might be the case, it is easy to see; and that such, in fact, was the case, it would be very natural to presume.

The leading circumstance which constitutes the connection between Christ and those for whom his sacrifice is available, is that he obeyed the law in their nature; and in the same nature suffered its penalty, or that which was equivalent. All had reproached or dishonored God alike, by trampling upon the authority of his law; Christ assumes their nature, and by his obedience and sufferings magnifies the law and makes it honorable. They with one voice had proclaimed that the law was not good, nor God worthy to be obeyed. Christ reverses this statement, and proclaims in the ears of the universe the purity of God's character, and the excellence and importance of his law. Nay, he condemns sin, vindicates God's holiness, and shows his unalterable determination to uphold the authority of his government; since, in the very expedient he has adopted for dispensing mercy, he will not forgive sin, without an adequate satisfaction to the right of his injured majesty, considered as the moral head of the universe. All this Christ did in man's nature, and with reference to the sins of men.

and more than this he need not do, and could not do, by offering himself a sacrifice for sin. What is there, let me ask, in the nature and circumstances of this great sacrifice, which should limit its availableness to a *part* of the human race? Did it not bear sufficiently upon the conduct of the *whole*? Did it not condemn sin—all sin—the sin of one man as much as the sin of another? Did it not vindicate the Divine holiness, and the purity and excellence of that law which man had broken? Did it not evince God's determination to sustain the authority of that law, while it exhibited his boundless compassion towards a world of rebels? What more would we have in it, or what other or greater moral influence would we have it exert, had it been designed as a sacrifice of expiation for the whole human family? As for ourselves, we regard the whole scheme of atonement in the light of a remedial law; that it was adopted to counteract the ruins of the fall—and that in its very nature it contained a provision coextensive with those ruins—though in its application, for wise and holy purposes, an important difference will be made. But here we shall be told, that if we have not left out of our statement, we have not sufficiently exhibited *one* all-controlling circumstance, to wit: the *actual substitution* of Christ for, and in behalf of, those for whom he suffered; that to constitute his sufferings an *available sacrifice*, it was necessary not only that he should die in the *nature*, but in the *room* of sinners; and that he might die in their *nature* without dying in their *stead*.

Our reply is, that we consider the death of Christ as a vicarious sacrifice, and offered in behalf of all men; because, from the very nature of the case, it could scarcely be otherwise, he dying in their nature, and in circumstances equally fitted to make him the substitute of all. He did and suffered what he must have done, had he been the substitute of all, and so far as we can



discern, nothing less or more ; what he did and suffered, bore the same relation to sin and holiness, to the law and government of God, as it would have done, had he offered himself for all ; nay, we consider it impossible that he should, by his obedience and death, have *condemned sin* and *magnified the law*, and this in man's nature, without doing it with reference to every man's sin, and the dishonor which every man had cast upon the law. His sacrificial service was *open* and *public*, performed in the face of the universe, and gave out a testimony which was heard through all worlds, and a testimony which bore as strongly upon one man's sin as another's, and upon the righteousness of God, in his condemnation. Nay, whatever was the language of this solemn transaction concerning God or man, equally respected all men, and God in relation to all. We could not doubt, therefore, that so far as Christ was the substitute of any man, he was the substitute of all men, were we to look only at the nature of his sacrifice, and the purposes it was immediately designed to answer in the moral administration of God. But the Bible has not left us to general principles here ; it has furnished us with facts and declarations upon the subject which we think ought forever to put this matter to rest.

Look a moment at the doctrine of sacrifice taught from the beginning, but with more explicitness under the dispensation of Moses. For certain transgressions, and some of them of a moral character, every sinner among the Israelites was required to bring a victim, over whose head he was to confess his sin. This victim was afterwards to be slain, and offered by the priest as a sin-offering unto the Lord, for the purpose of making an atonement for the soul. The life of the victim was accepted for the life of the sinner, the victim being always regarded as his *substitute*. Where the service was performed, agreeably to God's appointment, an atonement

was made, and sin forgiven, so far, at least, as to release the sinner from the penalties and disabilities incurred under the Jewish law. But the victims slain on these occasions were *types* of *Christ*, a nobler victim hereafter to come into the world. This, so far as I know, is universally admitted. But what follows? Why, most certainly, unless the Jewish law was deceptive, the type being the substitute of the sinner, the antitype must be his substitute also; for it looked to him, and derived all its significancy and efficacy from him. A typical offering would be but a mere mockery of the Divine justice and holiness, considered in any other light than as a prefiguration of the glorious Antitype. Of necessity, therefore, they must be regarded as closely conjoined. Admit, then, that every man in the Jewish nation, good or bad, elect or non-elect, when he brought his sin or trespass-offering to the Lord, was taught, by the very nature of the institution, that his *offering* or *victim* was his substitute, could he avoid the conclusion that a greater and infinitely more precious victim was his substitute also? Could he understand the nature of this sacrificial service, without perceiving that the type pointed to the *Antitype*, and that, by the appointment of God, both stood in the same relation to him, as a gracious medium through which pardon was to be obtained, and the Divine favor secured?

Now let me ask, whether it is reasonable to suppose that such a doctrine as this should be held forth in the Jewish sacrifices, if, in truth and in fact, Christ is the appointed substitute for the elect only? I know it is sometimes said, that the Jewish people were a typical nation, and that they properly prefigured the true Church of God, or the whole body of the elect, and, therefore, that their sacrifices for themselves typified Christ's sacrifice for his people. But this by no means avoids the difficulty. The Jewish sacrifices had a language which was distinct and appropriate, and that language was,

that every man's victim brought by God's appointment, was a vicarious offering, accepted in behalf of the guilty offerer; that this offering was a type of Christ, and of his great sacrifice, to be made once in the end of the world; and consequently that Christ, thus prefigured, stood in the same relation to the offerer as did the prefiguring victim, to wit, as his substitute, and the only piacular sacrifice on which his faith ought ultimately to rest. This, we have no doubt, is the true state of the case. But to show how perfectly futile the attempt to escape from this argument is, by resorting to the notion that the Jewish nation typified the Church, let us look back to the patriarchal ages, where no such refuge will be found.

It is the common belief of Christians, supported by the clear indications of Holy Writ, that sacrifices were instituted by God immediately after the fall; that these sacrifices were expiatory, resembling, in all important particulars, the sin-offerings under the law. But if these early sacrifices were of God's appointment, it will not be doubted that they were obligatory upon the whole human family during the patriarchal ages, nor that they were *typical*, bearing the same relation to the promised seed of the woman, and to *his sacrifice*, which the Mosaic sacrifices afterwards bore. What then do we find in this ancient sacrificial service? Why that God required every man, as he did Cain and Abel, to bring their victims, at the appointed time, and sacrifice them at his altars. Were these victims, then, the substitutes of the offerers, life being accepted for life? There is no room to doubt. Did these victims typify the Saviour, and his sacrifice of expiation? Most certainly they did, or they were an unmeaning and unprofitable service. But if typical of Christ, and the substitutes of the *offerers*, then Christ himself was exhibited as the substitute of the offerers, unless you break up the con-

nection between type and antitype. To him these offerings pointed, and the worshipers were directed, through the medium of these emblems, to the great sacrifice which he was to accomplish when he should come to break the head of the serpent, and procure the means of deliverance to a ruined world.

Here was instruction which God himself imparted, and it exhibits, with the light of a sunbeam, two important facts, to wit: that the *victims* employed in animal sacrifice were the appointed substitutes of their respective offerers, and that, being types of Christ, they show him to be the substitute of the offerers also. Now, as the rite of sacrifice was universal—instituted for the whole family of man—how can we escape the conclusion, that a foundation was laid for this universality by appointing the Mediator to appear in human nature, and to offer a sacrifice in behalf of the whole human family. Allow a substitution thus universal, and all appears plain; say, with the Apostle, that Christ is a Mediator between *God* and *men*, and that he, by the grace of God, tasted death for *every man*; give these expressions their full and unrestricted import, and there is no difficulty in allowing that the ancient victims were the real substitutes of those who offered them, and at the same time types of the Lord Jesus, who, in his sacrificial character, sustained an important relation to the entire family of man. But deny a substitution thus universal, and you are plunged into impenetrable darkness.

We have dwelt the longer on this point, because it is vital to the controversy. If Christ were a substitute for all men, or died in the room of all, then it cannot be denied that his sacrifice bore such a relation to the sins of men, that a way was thereby opened for the restoration of the whole human race to the favor of God. And on the other hand, if no substitution of this universal character existed, I do not see but that we must restrict the

availableness of Christ's death to the elect only. But our brethren of the opposite school will probably rejoin: "If Christ died in the room of all, why are not all saved? And again, if he died *for*, or in reference to all, why the *specialty* sometimes indicated in regard to the object of his death: he is said to lay down his life for his sheep, for his friends, for the Church?"

The first of these inquiries we answer by saying, that if Christ did die for all, so as to make his death available to their salvation, it will not follow as a consequence that all will actually be saved, and as to the indication of *specialty* in regard to the object of Christ's death, such as that he died for his sheep, his Church, his friends, these are all explained by a reference to the *ultimate* object of his death. Doubtless, he died with an intention of saving those who were given him in the covenant of redemption; they were the seed to serve him, promised as a reward for his agony and bloody sweat, and he looked to their salvation as the fruit of his sufferings, and as the joy set before him. But such an ultimate design of his death, which included the application which should be made of it by the sovereign and discriminating grace of God, hinders not the availableness of his sacrifice in relation to all, nor throws the slightest suspicion upon the doctrine which we have advocated in this lecture. Because he died with the declared design of saving his people, does it follow that he had no other design? Because this was an ultimate end sought in his death, is it a just consequence that he could have had no other end, either immediate or ultimate? Doubtless, whatever follows as the proper result of his atoning sacrifice, he sought more immediately or remotely as an end of his undertaking in this infinitely solemn and amazing tragedy.

But we have not done with this article; *that the sacri-*

*face of Christ stood in such a relation to the sins of men, as to open a way for the salvation of all.*

We argue this from the parable of the marriage supper, where it is expressly said, *all things are ready*, and *ready*, too, for those who, it seems, in the event never came.

\* \* \* We argue it from the indefinite tender of salvation made to all men where the Gospel comes. To us, no maxim appears more certain, *than that a salvation offered, implies a salvation provided*; for God will not tantalize his creatures by tendering them with that which is not in his hand to bestow. We argue it from the declared purpose of God in sending his Son into the world, and which he has expressed in such a manner as to leave no reasonable doubt that provision is made for all. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

By the *world* here, must be intended either the chosen vessels of mercy, sometimes called the elect world, or the *world* of mankind at large, without discrimination. Suppose we interpret it of the *elect world*. Then the sentiment will run thus: God so loved the *elect world*, that *whosoever* of the *elect world* shall believe in him.

But such language is absurd upon the very face of it, and cannot be supposed to proceed from the lips of unerring wisdom. Besides, what follows fixes the sense and demands a different interpretation. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him *might be saved*." And again, "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." It is utterly contrary to the *usus loquendi*, to interpret the phrase, *the world* of God's chosen people. It signifies often, mankind at large; sometimes the wicked part of mankind, as distinguished from God's people; and not

unfrequently the earth itself, with all that pertains to it. Nor is it doubted that it is sometimes taken for a part of mankind, instead of the whole, as when it is said, "*the world is gone after him.*" But it is nowhere used, that we have discovered, for the *elect*, the *Church*, or God's *redeemed ones*, in distinction from others. Interpret this passage, then, according to its most obvious signification, and what do we find but a declaration of God's love to the human race collectively, in the gift of his Son, which gift involved in it the means of their salvation. He sent his Son that *they might be saved*, not that they should infallibly be saved. His love was expressed in providing the *means*, and their destiny he has made to turn upon the use which they shall make of this inestimable provision of his mercy. And hence Christ himself says in the words immediately following: "He that believeth not is condemned already; *because* he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Not because a way of salvation was not provided through means of this Son, (for *that* he had asserted in a verse or two preceding) but because he had not believed in the name of the only begotten Son, but despised and rejected him.

Here he assigns the true and only cause of condemnation to sinners under the light of the Gospel, namely, their *unbelief*. But how could unbelief be the *cause*, at least the principal cause, if no sacrifice has been offered for them, and no means of salvation provided? There would then be another reason for their condemnation, a reason far deeper and more controlling, to wit, *no atonement*, nor the means of one.

We call not your attention to the universal terms so often employed upon this subject, as that Christ is the *Saviour of all men*, that though he tasted death for *every man*, and *gave himself a ransom for all*, &c., not because we suppose these terms ought not to be understood in the widest sense of universality, but because this ground

has been trodden over by the parties in this controversy. We ask you to consider some passages which we think far more decisive. Look at Hebrews x. 26, 27 : " For if we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins ; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." It is agreed, on all hands, that the Apostle here describes such as openly and deliberately apostatize from the truth, and set themselves vigorously to oppose Christianity ; men who are given up of God, and irrevocably sealed over to destruction, as a just judgment for their wickedness. Now, with respect to these men he saith, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*. The original is peculiarly strong and determinate. Οὐκ ἔτι ἐπὶ ἁμαρτιῶν δευ-  
 λαιεσται θυσία—a sacrifice for sin no more, 'or no longer remains. What does this imply, but that antecedent to this apostacy, there was a sacrifice which might have availed to take away their sins. But now there is none. They are left without hope, because cut off, by the just judgment of God, from any connection with the only sacrifice which can take away sin. They have trampled under foot the blood of the covenant ; and now, instead of pleading for mercy, it pleads for vengeance. But what propriety in this statement, if the blood of Christ was never an available sacrifice for them, and they never stood in any other relation to it than the apostate angels ? it having, in no sense, ever been shed for them. Surely, it must be strange language, to say there remaineth no more a sacrifice to those for whom there never was a sacrifice. If this passage stood alone, on the subject before us, I should consider it as settling the question forever, that the death of Christ bore such a relation to the sins of men, as to open a way for the restoration of the whole human family to the favor of God. For, if it bore such a relation to any one soul who is finally lost, with what reason could it be denied with respect to others ?



Look, again, at 1 Cor. viii. 11: "And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, *for whom Christ died.*" But how shall he *perish*? why, by being emboldened to eat those things which are offered unto idols, as the Apostle teaches us in the preceding verse, he shall be guilty of renouncing the living and true God, or which is equally fatal, confounding him with idols. The Apostle does not say he shall be injured, greatly injured, but he shall *perish*; using the very same word which Christ does, when he says that God gave his only begotten Son, that men *need not perish*, but have everlasting life; and the same word which Jude uses, when he speaks of those who *perished* in the *gainsaying of Core*. It is perfectly idle to attempt to explain away the solemn and awful import of this word; and yet if it be allowed its proper signification—if to *perish* is to lose one's soul—then men may be *lost* for whom Christ died; which concludes unanswerably in favor of our doctrine, that Christ died for all, or that his sacrifice bore a solemn and important relation to all.

We draw the same conclusion from 2 Peter ii. 1, where the Apostle speaks of some who privily bring in damnable heresies, *denying the Lord that bought them*, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. You have already heard the opinion of Calvin upon this text. And though our brethren of another school have often nibbled at it, and applied to it the various arts of criticism, still it stands as firm as the pillar of Hercules against the sentiment that Christ died for his people only.

If wicked men deny the Lord that bought them, doubtless they were *bought*, and bought by the price of that blood which alone is an adequate ransom for the soul.

But we are told that the *Lord* that bought them was not Jesus Christ, and of course, that they were not bought with his blood. Who, then, was this *Lord*, and

how did he buy these wicked men? Why, the Lord is God the Father, the Sovereign Ruler of the world, and he bought these men as Jehovah bought the Israelites, when he delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. But when was this interpretation first introduced? Can it be found in any of the ancient scholiasts or glossaries? Its modern date shows its origin; that it has been resorted to, not from its obvious agreement with the words, but from the necessity of the case. It has been seen that the old interpretation would be fatal to a certain theory; the words of the Apostle, therefore, must speak something else than what the Church from the beginning has supposed them to speak.

But let us hear the defence of this novel interpretation. The word in the original, translated Lord, is *δεσπότης*, and not *κύριος*, the more common appellation of Jesus Christ. This word, it is said, signifies Supreme Ruler, and is thus applied to God in several places in the New Testament. True; but is it not also applied to Christ, and even to men who sustain the relation of *master* to others as their servants? Whom does the Apostle mean by *δεσπότης* in 2 Tim. ii. 21, where he says, "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the *master's* use?" Whom does Jude mean by *δεσπότης* in a passage strikingly parallel with that under consideration, where he speaks of "certain men crept in unawares, who were of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and *denying the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ*," as it should be rendered. The best lexicographers tell us that this word has the force of *dominus* among the Latins, and may be applied to God as the Supreme Ruler, to Jesus Christ as the great Head of his Church, or to any head or master of a family. Nothing is therefore more futile than the attempt to escape the obvious construction of this passage

by a criticism upon the word *δοσάμενος*, which in this very place, Schleusner tells us, is applied to Jesus Christ. But if God, the Supreme Ruler of the world, is here designated by *δοσάμενος*, I should like to know a little more definitely *how* he has bought these wicked men, who privily bring in damnable heresies? Will you say he delivered them from the bondage of corruption? This neither the text nor the context declares. But if it were so, what was the price which he paid for their deliverance? When he bought the Israelites, he paid a price for them, and a heavy price it was; he gave Egypt for them—Ethiopia and Sheba for a ransom. Was there anything to correspond with this, when he bought the false prophets and false teachers spoken of in this text? According to our judgment, there was never a harder shift to blunt the edge of plain and pointed Scripture testimony. But we need not wonder, because as long as this text stands in the Bible, unperverted, it is entirely fatal to that scheme which contends that Jesus Christ was a sacrifice for the elect only.

Let me draw your attention to a single remark more. This important passage has always been considered as parallel with that in Jude, already mentioned. There is a striking resemblance in all the important points of character attributed to these wicked men by the two sacred writers, and an equally striking analogy in their doom. But what did they do, besides turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and leading a life of brutal sensuality? What did they do which in a peculiar manner irrevocably sealed them to perdition? Why, they denied the *δοσάμενος*, and by *δοσάμενος* Jude manifestly intends the Lord Jesus Christ.



## LECTURE XIV.

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### ELECTION.

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“And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.”—ACTS XIII. 48.

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BEFORE entering on the discussion of the doctrine supposed to be contained in these words; let me advert a moment to the original. Doubts have been entertained by some whether our translators have properly rendered the first clause, “as many as were *ordained* to eternal life.” They think the word translated *ordained*, ought to have been rendered *disposed*, *set in order* or *prepared*; and one writer renders the clause thus: “As many as were *earnestly determined* upon eternal life;” leaving it uncertain whether this determination was God’s or the creature’s, though most probably the creature’s. He has the good sense, however, to acknowledge that this determination, if it appertain to the creature was a preparation of heart flowing from the discriminating goodness of God, who is the author of all good desires in us. The phrase in the original, is “ὅσοι ἤσαν ἐταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν,” and the disputed word is ἐταγμένοι, a participle in the passive voice from the verb τασσω or ταττω. Τασσω, according to Schleusner, has several significations closely allied to each other. Properly it signifies:

*First.* *Statuo, ordino, colloco*, and *certo, ordino, colloco et dispono*, i. e., to appoint, ordain, set or place, and to set or place in a certain order.

*Secondly*, and metaphorically, it signifies *præscribo, præcipio, mando, jubeo*, i. e., to direct, command, order, require, &c.; and

*Thirdly*, it has the signification of *destino*, and he quotes our

text as an instance, rendering the passage thus, "As many as were destined by God to the eternal felicity of Christians, believed." Morus, who was no great friend to Calvinistic doctrines, is constrained to acknowledge that this is the appropriate meaning of *εταγμένους* in this place. But without depending on the opinion of others, Calvinists or Arminians, let us look at the use of this word in the New Testament, and especially by Paul and the writer of the Acts. In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts at the second verse, it is said, "And they *determined* that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem, *ἔταξαν*, signifying their determination, purpose, designation or will. Again, chapter xxii, 10, "And it shall be told thee of all things which are *appointed* for thee to do"—*ἐτάχται*—not prepared or set in order, but which are *commanded, prescribed, or fixed* by Divine appointment. Thus also, Acts xxviii, 23, "and when they had appointed him a day," or having appointed him a day, *εταξάμενοι δὲ αὐτῷ ἡμέραν*. In the same sense the word is used by the Evangelist, Matthew xxviii. 16, "Into a mountain where Jesus had *appointed* them," *ἐτάξαντο*. In Luke, also, vii. 8, "For I also am a man *set under authority*," i. e., commissioned or appointed, *τασσόμενος*. Again, Romans xiii. 1, "The powers that be *are ordained* of God," *ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ εταγμέναι εἰσίν*. And finally, 1 Corinthians xvi. 15, "Addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints"—*εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτοὺς*—i. e., devoted or consecrated themselves to this service. Whether this word is used in other senses in the New Testament, or whether it is used at all except in these cases I have not had time to ascertain. But it is easy to see from these examples that our translators had the best authority for the version which they have given, and that vain is the attempt to show that they were influenced by predestinarian prejudices. A greater difficulty arises from the *οἱ*, or *quot, quot*, as many—as though no others in that great assembly were ordained to eternal life, and all that were so believed on that occasion, which some may think in itself not very probable. Such, however, is the record, and who has a right to falsify it? or perhaps the meaning may be, that such and such only as were ordained to eternal life believed.

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AND did no more believe? Not when Paul preached, a man never surpassed in the force of his reasoning and in the power of his eloquence? Could he persuade none to believe that Jesus was the Christ except those who

were ordained to eternal life? None. He made a powerful appeal to the Old Testament; he showed from ancient predictions, acknowledged by his hearers to be the Word of God, that Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised to raise up unto Israel—that everything which related to him, his birth, his life, his doctrines, his miracles, his death, his resurrection accorded with the voice of the holy prophets. He reasoned, he expostulated, he entreated, but they only who were ordained to eternal life believed. Even some who seemed on the point of giving up their opposition and embracing the Gospel, finally rejected it. Mournful fact; still it was a fact; for “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, and the rest were blinded.” What would a plain, unsophisticated mind make of this? Could he avoid perceiving that some of Paul’s hearers were ordained to eternal life, and that others were not—that as many as were thus ordained believed unto salvation—and that the rest did not believe; but to them the Gospel was preached in vain. Surely, here is no darkness, no metaphysical subtlety, no labored reasoning. A plain fact is set before us level to every capacity; but a fact which draws after it the most important consequences. For if some of Paul’s hearers at Antioch were ordained to eternal life, and as many as were thus ordained believed, shall we not be compelled to admit a similar ordination in the case of all who believe unto life eternal? especially when the Scriptures constantly refer us to such an ordination, or purpose of God as the cause of man’s salvation?

The doctrine of our Church, and as we believe the doctrine of the Bible is, that God hath preordained some to everlasting life, while he has for some holy and wise design left the rest of mankind to perish in their sins. In doing this he acts neither an unjust nor arbitrary part, but is moved by a regard to his own glory and the

highest good of his moral kingdom. Certain it is, if he be infinitely wise and good, he cannot trespass upon the rights of his creatures by treating them in a way which would infringe upon their claims; and it is equally certain, however unfathomable his counsels may be to us, that the course which he pursues in the administration of his government, can be no other than that which is ultimately for the best, taking into view the whole system of beings and events. The wheels of his government may, to us, appear high and dreadful—and from their numberless movements it may strike us as if they were both complicated and embarrassed—but it becomes us to remember that these wheels are full of eyes, and go straight forward in the execution of a purpose as wise as it is powerful and irresistible.

I am aware that the doctrine we have laid down as a subject of discussion at this time, viz.: that God hath preordained some to eternal life, and not others, is a doctrine exceedingly unwelcome to the natural heart of man; while it not unfrequently perplexes individuals *who*, we charitably hope, are themselves the heirs of salvation. It is not too much to say that there is naturally a strong prejudice in the human mind against this doctrine. But what is to be done? Must the minister of Christ yield to this feeling, and conceal from his people, or very partially exhibit to them, a doctrine which he regards as standing prominent on the page of inspiration? This would plainly be to impeach the Divine wisdom, for inculcating a doctrine which had better been concealed, or which, to say the least, should not often be presented. There can be, I think, but one opinion among sober-minded men on this subject. If the doctrine be a doctrine of the Bible, let it be expounded and enforced, as a part of that system which God has graciously communicated for our instruction in righteousness. Let it be done wisely, indeed, but let it be done

*faithfully*; keeping back no part of it, nor disguising it under a specious form of words, lest its naked simplicity should awaken the hostility of gainsayers.

Our inquiry now is as to the truth of the doctrine. Has God ordained some to eternal life, while, in the exercise of his sovereign pleasure, he has passed by others? What is the voice of Scripture?

In the eighth chapter of Romans we have these remarkable words: "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow (or before acknowledge), he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son: moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified." Here is an *unbroken chain*, and if dispassionately viewed, must, we think, furnish an unanswerable proof of our doctrine. Who are they that are the called, according to God's purpose? Certainly not all who receive the external call of the Gospel; because it is said of them that they *love God*, and that all things work together for their good; neither of which is true of the great mass of Gospel hearers. They are, then, those that are called and saved with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to God's own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. Hence it is declared, in the second place, that they are those whom God *foreknew*, or, as the original word signifies, *fore-acknowledged*. To *know* a person, according to the style of Scripture, is often the same as to own or *acknowledge* him—or which is the same thing, to regard him with special favor. Thus, God said of the nation of Israel: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Thus, also, it is said of all God's people: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." And in accord-



ance with this, Christ will say to some in the great and last day: "I *know* you not," and "I never *knew* you," that is, I never *acknowledged* you. So to *foreknow* is to regard beforehand, with a purpose of favor.

It is the same thing in the present case, as for God to set his love upon those whom he intends eventually to save. How can it be otherwise? For he could not know any good in them, unconnected with his intention to impart that good. We see not how this can be denied, unless we deny that he works all our good in us and for us. Allow then, that God had a purpose of mercy concerning those whom he *foreknew*, and that this purpose was the purpose of salvation; what next? Why, that "he *predestinates* them to be *conformed to the image of his Son*." They could not go to heaven without this, nor perform a single condition on which heaven is promised. Till Christ's image is begun there is no *holiness*, and without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord. What follows? Why, those whom God predestinates to be holy, he makes holy. For *whom* he did predestinate, *them* he also *called*—called, not with the outward call of the Gospel, simply, but with the inward and effectual call of his Spirit; agreeably to that passage: "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are *called*; but God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." Now those whom God thus calls he justifies, by absolving them from the sentence of condemnation, and declaring them entitled to life. And this once done, is done forever. "For whom he justified, them he also glorified." The past time is used to denote the certainty of the event; for so irrevocable and effective is God's purpose, that he calls things that are not as though they were. What shall we say then? If God be for us, who shall be against us? If he has *foreknown* us as persons whom he designed

forever to bless, if, in the fulfillment of this design, he predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son: if he has called and justified us according to his predetermined counsel, will he not glorify us? This was evidently the Apostle's creed; and therefore he asks, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, and gave himself for us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" that love which was from eternity, and which looked to eternity—that love which has been so effective in our own calling, our justification, and in the promise of glorification. Now strike out a link in this golden chain, and you would indeed destroy the doctrine we have set up, that God has, from the beginning, ordained some to eternal life; you would separate the purpose of God from his works, and make the calling, justification and glorification of believers, to depend on something besides the discriminating love and efficient counsel of Jehovah. But who shall dare to do this? who shall venture to contradict the Apostle in a matter which he lays down with so much precision and emphasis?

Besides, these are not casual expressions of this sacred penman. He speaks of it elsewhere in a manner the most explicit and decided. Thus, in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual

blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him from the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." What could be either more definite or conclusive? Was not Paul a predestinarian? Did he not believe in the counsel and decrees of God? and that these decrees reached to the moral actions and eternal destinies of men? Believers are here said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world—to be chosen to holiness as well as to salvation—to be *predestinated* to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, in whom also they had obtained an inheritance in heaven; and all this according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

One would think there was no need of being in the dark on this subject, if we were only willing to yield to the plain and unequivocal testimony of God. For if he work all things after the counsel of his own will, then the salvation of believers, who are declared to be his workmanship, must be the result of his eternal purpose and design. Does God, then, choose or elect those who are to be the subjects of his eternal favor? Does he call them out from the rest of the world, and bestow on them of his own free and sovereign mercy, the blessings of salvation? This is what the Bible asserts, and this, indeed, is what lays the foundation of the very word *elect*, so often used in relation to them. Peter addresses Christians in his time, as "*elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification

unto obedience." And Paul says, "that he endured all things for the *elect's* sake, that they might obtain salvation with eternal glory." He demands in one place, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's *elect*?" and in another, he beseeches Christians as the *elect of God*, holy and beloved, to put on bowels of mercies. He tells the Thessalonians, "that he knew their *election of God*, because the Gospel had come unto them, not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Nor may we suppose that this mode of expression was peculiar to the Apostles. It was familiar to our Lord himself, from whose lips no doubt they had learned it.

He speaks of the *elect* as those for whose sake the days of tribulation should be shortened—as those whose prayers God would certainly hear; *whom* false Christs and false Apostles would not be able to deceive, but *whom* his angels would surely gather from the four winds of heaven, and place by his side in the great and last day.

The *elect* are a well-defined class in the Scriptures. They are that portion of Adam's race which were given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, as the fruit of his toil and bloody sweat. They are the seed which was to serve him, the travail of his soul, which he should see and be satisfied. They are his Church or mystical body, for which he is said to "give himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the Word, and finally present it to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." They are his sheep, for whom, above all others, and with a special design for their salvation, he laid down his life. He speaketh of them, when he says, "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out; and this is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but

raise it up again at the last day." And again : " Other sheep I have which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring ; and *they shall* hear my voice, and there *shall be* one fold and one shepherd."

But why are these persons called *elect* ? This is often made a question. Our doctrine is, that they are called *elect*, because they are chosen of God, in Christ, before the foundation of the world ; and chosen, not because they were holy, but that they might be holy and without blame before him in love. Our doctrine is, that they are styled *elect*, not because they have first chosen Christ, but because Christ has first chosen them, and ordained them, that they should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain.

That this is the proper and legitimate force of the word, when applied to the subject before us, is sufficiently manifest, from a bare inspection of the passages where it occurs. But mark, especially, the passage which follows : " We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you, beloved of the Lord ; because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Observe the expression, "*God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation.*" This choice is not an after business with God, as they would represent it who make him choose men to salvation, because they believe, or after they believe. He chooses from the beginning, or from the foundation of the world, as the word properly imports, those whom he finally brings to life ; he chooses them through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. *Salvation* is the end, *sanctification* the means. But it may be said, that he chooses them, because he foresees that they will truly *believe* ; their foreseen faith being the cause of their choice or discrimination. This cannot be, because it would make their election turn upon their own works, and not upon the mere mercy of

God, contrary to the express declaration of Paul, in Romans xi. There he tells us that God had among his brethren, the Jews of that generation, a remnant devoted to his service, as really and truly as in the time of the prophet Elias, though in both cases the external appearances of religion were discouraging. "God hath not cast away his people whom he *foreknew* or foreacknowledged. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias, how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 'Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.' But what saith the answer of God unto him? 'I have reserved unto myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Even so, then, at this present time also, there is a *remnant* according to the *election* of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise, work no more is work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for"—that is acceptance with God; "but the *election* hath obtained it"—to wit, that part of Israel called the *election* or body of the elect—"and the rest were blinded." This reasoning is too obvious to require comment. Here is *election* stated in the clearest manner; but not an *election* founded upon works, either as already existing, or as foreseen to exist. It is an *election* founded upon the mere grace of God alone, an *election* which finds the subject of it in his sins, guilty and helpless, and which comes to him, not because he has repented and believed, and found acceptance with God, but to give him repentance and faith, that he may be accepted. This view of the subject places God on the throne, and makes the Scriptures consistent with themselves. This shows us that it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. This leaves the sinner justly and absolutely in the hands of God, to do with him



as he pleases, and corresponds with that declaration of God himself, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." This accords with the sentiment that our salvation is all of grace, as thus expressed by the Apostle: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." And again: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an *holy calling*, not according to our works,"—according to what then?—"according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us, in Christ, before the world began." It would carry us too far, to call up all the passages which bear upon this point, or to discuss the cavils and objections which have been raised against them.

I would add, however, that the truth of the proposition before us, that God hath ordained some to eternal life while he has left others to perish, is perfectly manifest from the difference we see made in individuals by the dispensation of his grace, compared with the doctrine of depravity and the efficacious influence of the Divine Spirit in the conversion and salvation of men. Some, we perceive, live and die in their sins, while others are brought to repentance, so far as we can judge, and made partakers of the salvation of the Gospel. Whence this difference? All are, by nature, totally depraved, and if left to themselves, we are assured, would neither repent nor believe. Why then do any repent? Is it not owing to His gracious act, who quickeneth those that are dead in trespasses and sins? If he did not take away the stony heart out of the flesh and give a heart of flesh, would it ever be done? If he did not create men in Christ Jesus unto good works, would they ever perform them? If he did not shed abroad his love in their hearts would that love ever be felt? But if God must interpose for these purposes must he not do it of design? and if from design, when did that design begin? or did it never

begin, having existed in his own bosom from eternity? Surely, with God there can be no new designs. Consequently those whom he now designs to save he eternally designed to save, which is nothing else than his decree or purpose to save them.

The same truth follows inevitably from the fact that God has a fixed plan of operation. Did he make the world without knowing what was to become of the world which he made; or without intending anything in relation to it? Did he not foresee what would be the moral conduct of every individual, and what his final and eternal destiny? especially did he not know that many of the lost children of Adam would be redeemed from eternal death through the mediation of his Son? and also who these persons would be? Can we suppose such a foresight without involving a purpose, seeing their salvation is to be effected by his own agency? How stands this matter? He gave his own Son to die; not simply to make their salvation *possible* but certain; for he promised him a *seed* as a reward of his sufferings. Their salvation, therefore, was infallibly connected with his death; nay more, it was distinctly aimed at as an ultimate end of his death. Christ had both his work and his reward fully before him. He knew that his death would be followed by the salvation of an innumerable company of mankind; nor could he be ignorant of the individuals, their names and circumstances, if we suppose him a Divine Person, unless, at the same time, we suppose that the system of Divine government is a mere system of expedients, and that the all-wise God neither knows what ought to be done, nor what he designs to do, until the time comes in which he is to act. But known unto God are all his works, from the foundation of the world, and doubtless his works of grace among the rest. He works all things after the counsel of his own will; but that counsel is not taken in time, but exists



from eternity. It is according to his *eternal purpose*, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, that the *Church is redeemed*, and that to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God in and by the Church is displayed. The Apostle distinctly asserts this, and consequently the salvation of the Church was both a matter of certainty and a matter of design. I ask if this was not equally true of every individual in the Church as well as of the Church collectively? or does God's purpose reach the whole without reaching the parts? Can there be a doubt, then, whether God's *plan* embraces the salvation of the elect, considered as one of his own proper works? If not, he must have had a purpose concerning them individually, or which amounts to the same thing, he must have ordained some to eternal life, while he did not thus ordain concerning others.

But there are many objections to this doctrine, some of which we will briefly consider.

(1.) If this doctrine be true, some will say mankind must be in a most deplorable condition, and an awful destiny hangs over many. They are not ordained to life and will never see life. Be it so. Is it not equally certain that as many will perish and perish as awfully, if there were no decree or purpose of God found in the Bible? None but the *impenitent* and *unbelieving* will perish upon any system—not one more, not one less. But all these, without fail, are doomed to everlasting perdition upon the objectors' own principles. Now, whether these be few or many, can be determined only by an appeal to facts; and these facts will be the same, and hold out the same fearful prospect to mankind, whether the doctrine objected to be true or false. One thing is certain, God will save all the righteous and punish all the wicked, whether they be few or many; nor will his decreeing to do this make the thing less fit in itself, or alter the number of the righteous and the

wicked respectively. Believing in the doctrine of election, I may suppose as many will be saved as he who denies that doctrine, unless he also deny the final difference which God will put between those that serve him and those that serve him not. This important fact is often overlooked by those who object to this doctrine. They seem to suppose that if it were not for election almost the whole human family would be saved—certainly a much larger number than upon the admission of this doctrine. But no supposition was ever more groundless. Still we may be told that, according to our system, God decrees not only to *save the righteous* but to *make* them righteous, that they may be saved! True; but this decree does not make the rest wicked, nor render their state more perilous than it would otherwise be. God's *eternal purpose* to save some, is to be regarded in the light of a *provision* against universal ruin, and in no degree as laying a bar in the way of those who finally perish. It simply leaves them where they are, in a state guilty and without hope. God's delivering Lot out of Sodom, did not bring down the storm of fire and brimstone out of heaven upon those who were left behind. They would have perished had not Lot made his escape. It is objected

(2.) That a purpose to save some is incompatible with God's *impartiality*, and virtually makes him a respecter of persons. This is certainly a mistake. For has not God a right to do what he will with his own? His bestowing favor on some, and not on others, does not render him a respecter of persons, unless in justice he were bound to confer a like favor on all; and then it would cease to be a favor, being what justice demands, not what grace freely bestows. If they who shall finally perish had any just claim on God for his forgiving mercy, or, in other words, if they did not deserve to perish, there would be some ground for complaint on his passing

them by. But not as the case now is. They deserve to suffer, and if God treat them as they deserve he does them no wrong. And if he pardon some, and does not pardon others equally rebels against his throne, who shall arraign his proceedings? Not the rebels themselves who fall under the just stroke of the law. It is a prerogative of which God is jealous—and which he will certainly maintain—to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and to punish the guilty when he will. Listen to the Apostle on this subject: “What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?” Shall God’s right to exercise his sovereignty in this case be denied? Nay, shall the guilty themselves fly in the face of their judge? Beware, O man! of replying against God. His throne will be guiltless, whether he lift thee to heaven or sink thee to hell. Is thine eye evil because he is good? It will be time enough to complain, when he shall lay upon any of us what is not justly our due. Till then, we might as well complain that he did not make us angels, instead of men, or did not keep us from sinning after he made us, as to find fault that we are punished for our sins, though others should obtain mercy.

(3.) But again it is objected, “Be it so that I am justly condemned for my sins. Still, if I am not ordained to eternal life, I shall never be saved; and what will it signify for me to attend to the affair of my salvation? If I am to be saved I shall be saved, do what I will; and if I am to be lost I shall be lost, do what I can.”

This is false reasoning; and if it be intended as an objection against the doctrine advocated in this discourse, it is enough to reply, that when God decrees the salvation of any man, he decrees the means as well as the



end, and the means are inseparable from the end. Those who are chosen to eternal life, are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. Men cannot go to heaven without being holy, and they cannot be holy without obeying God's commands. He who presumptuously attempts to sever the means from the end, not only reasons falsely, but reasons and acts against the life of his own soul. But if the objection now urged be a practical one, one intended as an excuse for doing nothing, I must beg leave to say to the objector that he is not sincere nor in earnest in what he says. For he does not act upon this principle in his temporal concerns. If he believes the doctrine of election to be true, (and it is only upon the supposition that it is true that he can consider it as standing in his way,) he must believe that all other events are predetermined by God; he must believe that health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, the length of his life and the time of his death, are equally *predetermined*. Why, then, does he not reason in the same manner in regard to these events? Why does he not say in the hour of sickness, If God has determined my recovery, I shall recover, whether I apply to a physician, or make use of any remedies, or not; and if he has determined my disease shall prove fatal, fatal it will be in spite of all means, and therefore I will use none. If God has determined I shall live ten years, I shall live ten years, whether I eat, or drink, or take any care of my life or not. You can find no man except a maniac who will reason in this manner. And why? Because every one perceives the means and the end are inseparably connected in the affairs of this world. Are they not equally so in the things of religion? Until men therefore will carry the objection through, applying it to *things temporal* as well as to *things spiritual*, we have a right to say that they are not sincere in urging this objection; that it is only a pretext for doing nothing;

an idle excuse, which the conscience will condemn in the hour of death and in the final judgment.

(4.) Again, it is objected that a positive decree to save some is inconsistent with the free agency of man, and makes him but a mere machine. How so? It surely does not stand opposed to the *freedom* of those who shall be saved, since the most that it can do in relation to them is to make it certain that they shall be willing in the day of God's power; and as to others, it does not immediately concern them—it simply leaves them where they are. It throws no barrier in the way of their salvation, and it removes none. If they perish, (and what else can we look for?) they will perish because they willingly persevere in rejecting the overtures of the Gospel. I speak, of course, of those to whom the Gospel is made known.

None of all the human race will be saved most certainly, but those in whose behalf God shall mercifully interpose by his enlightening and sanctifying power. But if he interpose, doubtless he will do it of design, but neither the design itself, nor the execution of it, is in the least degree incompatible with the freedom of man. I admit that God's purpose makes it certain, that those whom he hath chosen to salvation, shall sooner or later comply with the conditions of salvation, but their compliance is a voluntary thing, of course; when they comply they do *that*, and *that* only, which is pleasing to them to do. Here is no *constraint*, no infringement of their moral liberty, if to do as a man pleases is to be free, or if in the mere fact of *being pleased* his liberty is not constrained.

(5.) But if God has determined to save some and not others, then some will be certainly saved, and the rest as certainly perish. Can we avoid, upon this principle, the appalling conclusion, that those who shall

finally perish were made for the very purpose of being miserable? They were made, it must be admitted, knowing that their end would be destruction. This will not be denied by any who allow the absolute foreknowledge of God. Can it, then, be said that he made those who he foresaw would finally perish, with an expectation that they would finally be saved? No person will pretend this; and as little can it be pretended that he purposed them for an end which he knew they would never reach. This would be in the highest degree absurd, as it would be supposing the all-wise Creator to aim at an object which he did not expect to accomplish—a thing not to be charged to the account of any rational being. The truth is, God made all men naturally capable of endless felicity, and put into their hands the natural means of securing it. That is to say, he made them moral agents, and placed them under a law which they were sacredly bound to obey, and which, if they had obeyed without defection, their happiness would inevitably have ensued. But at the same time, he anticipated their revolt, and the final misery which, to many of them at least, would certainly follow. If you ask why he did this—why he created men—when he knew the consequences as to many would be so disastrous? The answer is, because so it seemed good in his sight, he saw that his own glory required it, and doubtless the highest happiness of his immeasurable and eternal kingdom. The Lord hath made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil, but not for the day of evil as the ultimate end of their being; this end is his own glory, and the good of his kingdom as connected with his glory. But whether this will satisfy the inquiring and complaining mind or not, one thing is certain; the difficulties attending the subject are no greater to those who maintained the doctrine of the Di-

vine decrees, and the decree of election among the rest, than to those who admit the absolute prescience of God.

(6.) After all it may be said, if the doctrine be true, is it not a discouraging doctrine? And should it not rather be suppressed, or, at all events, sparingly inculcated; lest it prevent men from attending in earnest to the great subject of their salvation? This is the opinion of some who believe the doctrine. But we ask, is this respectful to the Divine wisdom. If the doctrine be revealed, why should it not be declared? For what purpose has God revealed it, if it is not to arrest our attention, and become the subject of serious and deliberate regard? It is written with more or less distinctness on almost every page of the Bible; and the diligent reader of this Sacred Volume can scarcely turn away his eyes from it if he would. And as to its discouraging effect, we are greatly mistaken if it has this influence upon any but those who are profoundly ignorant of their own character. If men are once convinced of their desperate wickedness, they will presently discover that there is no other hope for them, but in the sovereign interposition of God. They will see that if left to themselves, and to their own unassisted endeavors, they will inevitably continue in their rebellious and guilty course till they fall into the pit of destruction. Such persons are not discouraged when they hear God say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." So far from it, it is from this and similar declarations that they take courage rather, *believing* that, guilty and deplorable as their case is, it is not beyond the reach of the Divine power and mercy; that He who has so often signalized his grace in subduing the stout-hearted and rebellious, and in plucking the guilty from the very borders of the pit, can, if it please him, make them the monuments of his supera-

bounding mercy. This is their last and only hope. With respect to the self-righteous and careless, no doubt the doctrine advocated in the preceding discourse will often be found unwelcome; nor would it be strange if they should abuse it as they do other doctrines of the Scriptures, to their greater guilt and condemnation.



## LECTURE XV.

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### ON EFFECTUAL CALLING.

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IN my last Lecture, the doctrine of *particular* and *personal election*, as understood by Calvinists, was considered, with some of the objections usually urged against this doctrine. I call your attention now to the doctrine of *effectual calling*. This was briefly alluded to, in the last Lecture, as a subject intimately associated with that of election. In short, they mutually imply each other. If God actually sets his love on a portion of the human family, intending to interpose for their salvation, doubtless what he *intends* to do will be done; and if he ever interposes effectually in behalf of any, to induce them to comply with the terms of salvation, there is no reason to question that he *purposed* to do so *from everlasting*. He would not purpose in the case, if he had not the power to accomplish what he purposed. Nor can we suppose his power put forth at any time, for any end, without a correspondent design which was neither new nor transient, but coeternal with his being.

In religion, as in science, there are a few leading principles which are fundamental to all the rest. Mistake any one of these, and you will always be in the dark. No matter how much you may read or reflect, how minute or how wide your researches may be, if your *foundation* be unsound, your superstructure will never be secure.

Do we desire, then, to become acquainted with Christian doctrine ? We must spare no pains thoroughly to understand its primary truths. We must examine and re-examine, till we are reasonably assured that our first principles are grounded upon the plain and unequivocal testimony of God. And in doing this, it is not unimportant that we should bring an humble and impartial, as well as an inquisitive spirit to the work, a spirit which is willing to abide by the declaration of God's Word, whether it be for us or against us, whether it fall in with our preconceived opinions or oppose them.

For want of this, thousands of laborious inquirers have been led astray. Their object has been to learn, not so much what hath the Lord spoken, as whether his Word can be made to yield a sense which accords with a creed already adopted, or which they may wish to adopt. There is the more reason for making these suggestions, since whatever may be the true system of the Bible, nothing is more certain, than that it is a system directly repugnant to the native feelings of our hearts.

The question I propose to consider is, whether there be any such thing, properly speaking, as an *effectual call* ; that is, whether the Bible authorizes the use of any such language, when speaking of the Divine agency in the matter of our conversion and salvation. That this has long been the opinion of the Church, we cannot doubt ; that this was the opinion of the Reformers, and many leading men since their day, is obvious, from their creeds and confessions which are still extant. Let me advert a moment to some of these symbols. They are entitled, for the most part, to be regarded as the form of sound words, if nothing more. They show, at least, what great and good men have thought upon this subject in days that are gone by, days which were trying to them, and deeply interesting to the Church of God.

In our shorter catechism, " effectual calling " is said

to be "the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, and enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, as he is freely offered to us in the Gospel." In this definition, the whole work of conviction and conversion is comprised, and its accomplishment ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as its true and proper cause; not, however, overlooking the instrumentality of the Word, nor denying that an outward call is freely given to all, where the Gospel comes. There is no truth more certain, than that the Gospel is to be preached to all men, without distinction, and that all are invited and commanded by it, to come and partake of the blessing which it reveals. This is clearly taught in the parable of the marriage supper. At the same time, it is manifest that all do not come. Some indulge in frivolous excuses, and disobey the heavenly message, and perish under aggravated guilt. The same, it is believed, would be the case of all, if left to pursue their own chosen way. The human heart being totally depraved would uniformly and universally reject the offers of the Gospel, if the Divine Spirit did not accompany the Word by his own secret and powerful influence, and dispose the sinner humbly and thankfully to embrace the proffered mercy. This influence or work of the Spirit, our standards denominate *a call*, and an *effectual* call, because it never fails to reach its end. All who are the subjects of it are certain to obey, and obeying, to become partakers of the blessings which the Gospel freely tenders. The view which our fathers had of this subject, you will find more fully expressed in the larger catechism, and in the confession of faith. "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus

Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace." This effectual calling, they add, "is of God's free and special grace alone; not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein."

Two things, you perceive, are here conjoined—God's eternal purpose, and an effectual call, as the result of that purpose. Nor is it possible it should be otherwise, since whatever God does he eternally designed to do. The same idea with respect to an effectual call, is found in all the creeds and formularies of the early Protestant Churches, and in none, perhaps, with more distinctness and precision, than in the articles of the Church of England. In their 17th article, predestination and effectual calling are united. "Predestination to life (not predestination to external privileges) predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly (*i. e.* firmly) decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they who be endued with so excellent a benefit of God," (that is, they who are thus predestinated to life,) "be called according to God's purpose by the Spirit working in due season; they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously

in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." We know, indeed, that the great body of the English Church *do not receive* this article in its most obvious construction; that "much learning" and ingenuity have been employed within the last century to give it a sense compatible with Arminian views; but we are well satisfied that no learning or talent will ever be able to overturn this noble monument of ancient orthodoxy. It stands firm, and is destined, we trust, to be instrumental in bringing back the sons of that church to the creed of their forefathers, and to "the faith once delivered to the saints." Many have returned within the last forty years; and this species of reform is still advancing. A thousand ministers of that communion, in Great Britain alone, besides many distinguished laymen, are known to have embraced Calvinistic sentiments.

But our faith, my brethren, must not "stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." To *his* tribunal are we responsible, not to the tribunal of mortals. "To the law, then, and to the testimony:" "What saith the Scripture" concerning an effectual call?

I consider that call as *effectual* which, actually brings the soul into a state of salvation, by causing it to comply with the terms of the Gospel. Any call which leaves the subject of it short of this, cannot be effectual, proceed from what source it may, and accomplish what else it may. Let it come from the Word, or providence, or Spirit of God, or from all three combined, if it does not issue in "repentance unto life," and in "faith unfeigned," it is not effectual. But that there is a call or work of the Spirit which is effectual, and which never fails to bring the soul to a hearty compliance with the terms of the Gospel, we think abundantly evident from the Scriptures. Such a call had Zaccheus, the publican, when Christ said to him, "Come down, for to-day I must

abide at thy house." He had climbed the sycamore tree to see Jesus, who he was, and from no higher motives, it would seem, than to gratify his curiosity. Be this as it may, he came down a very different man from what he was when he went up. He came down a sincere penitent and a true believer, ready to do justice to those whom he had injured, and to bestow one half of his goods to feed the poor. That the change was thus sudden and effectual is manifest from what Christ said in the presence of his friends immediately after: "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Such a call had Matthew, who was sitting at the receipt of custom, and who, as well as Zaccheus, was a publican by profession, or a tax-gatherer—an employment so odious among the Jews, that nothing but the love of money could induce any of their countrymen to pursue it. While at his office, receiving the taxes and custom imposed by the Roman law, Jesus said to him, "Follow me;" and such a power went with his words, that he instantly arose and followed him, leaving his lucrative employment to become a disciple and companion of Jesus in the labors and sufferings of the Gospel. A call, equally discriminating and effectual, is mentioned by the Apostle in the eighth of Romans: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." But who are the called according to God's purpose? Not all, surely, who receive the outward call of the Gospel; not all, indeed, who are more or less moved upon by the Divine Spirit; none, most certainly, but those who love God; none but those to whom all things work together for their good; for here they that love God, and they that are the called, by way of eminence, are the very same persons. But what does their calling import?



Plainly that inward and efficacious work of the Spirit, by which they are called out of a state of sin and death into a state of life and peace. It is something done according to God's purpose, and with reference to their salvation: and the next words tell us what that something is: "For whom he did foreknow, or fore-acknowledge, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called;" called by the power of his Spirit in their hearts, (or else their sanctification is wholly overlooked by the Apostle in this passage: "And whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified.") What other meaning can be put upon the word "called," in this passage? Will you say, contrary to the established use in other places, that those whom God predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, them he called sons, or gave them the name of sons? I ask, then, how they *came* by the nature of sons, if that nature they have? Foreknowing them did not give them this nature. Predestinating them to be conformed to the image of his Son did not give them this conformity. For a mere purpose to do a thing does not do it. Justifying them does not give them this nature, for this is the mere act of God, declaring them absolved from their sins, and entitled to life. Nor would glorifying them give them the nature of sons; for this would be only advancing them to a state of honor—a state absurd and preposterous indeed, if they remained under the power of their sinful passions and propensities. Nothing could give them this nature but the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Spirit, who makes all the heirs of glory meet for their eternal inheritance.

Is it then to be believed, that while mentioning in their order those glorious acts of the Divine mercy, by

which sinners are rescued from eternal misery and brought to everlasting life, the Apostle should leave out of view altogether so great, so distinguishing a work as that of the Holy Spirit in imparting spiritual life to the soul, and giving it all its qualifications for the enjoyment of heaven? Let those believe this who can. We are not of that number. In the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, we find a passage which clearly evinces the doctrine of an effectual call. Verses 23, 24: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." But were not all called to whom Christ crucified was preached? Most certainly. They were called by the external call of the Gospel, and this call was loud, solemn and sincere. But with all it was not effectual. Many neglected and despised it, and brought upon themselves a heavier condemnation. But there was another call received by some—a call of a higher and more efficacious character; and therefore it is said that "unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, (distinguishing them from others,) we preach Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Here, then, was a call peculiar, sovereign and effectual; for to those who received it, and to those only, did Christ become "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

And in connection with this, and correspondent with it, the Apostle adds in the verses which follow, "Ye see your calling, brethren"—not your calling as ministers, as some have supposed, but your calling as Christians—"Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty;



and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not to bring to nought things that are." And why? "That no flesh should glory in his presence," as though one had made himself better than another; but that all might acknowledge their indebtedness to his sovereign mercy. "For of him are ye in Christ Jesus," (if there at all,) "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The meaning is not that Christ was appointed to be all this to us, but that he is actually made this to us by the sovereign and almighty agency of God, in bringing us to believe on his name; and therefore it is added that "according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Now, if it were otherwise, if they had embraced Christ because they were better than others, or had made a better improvement of their gifts and advantages, (as is sometimes said,) they would have had some cause of glorying in themselves, seeing it was owing to their own peculiar efforts that such a wide and important difference now existed between them and others who still remained in unbelief. But as this was not the fact—as their embracing Christ, and becoming partakers of the blessings of redemption, was of God, wholly owing to his sovereign and efficacious call—all ground of glorying in themselves was forever removed.

You will find the same effectual call alluded to in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, verse 17, where the Apostle tells his brethren that he made it the constant subject of his prayers to the Father of mercies, "That the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of his (God's) calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power towards them that believe, according to the

working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Now, what is that calling which is here considered as the calling of God the Father, and his calling by way of eminence or distinction? a calling full of hope, which none can understand but those whose eyes are enlightened? a calling connected with the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and with the exceeding greatness of his power towards them that believe? Was it, think you, a mere *external* call? a call to outward privileges common to all who hear the Gospel? a call which men may be the subjects of and yet live and die in unbelief? Or was it a sovereign and invincible call? a call of the Spirit, which quickens those that are dead in trespasses and sins and makes them alive unto God? a call of no less energy than that which awakened the sleeping Saviour from his tomb and placed him at God's right hand in the heavens, far above all principality and power? I leave you most cheerfully to judge, after putting two questions which ought never to be overlooked when examining this subject. (1.) To what end does God work in men, either first or last, with the exceeding greatness of his power, and according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead, if it be not to raise them from a death of sin unto a life of righteousness? And, (2,) is it possible that after he has thus wrought in them, and notwithstanding this working, called also by the Apostle his effectual working, they should still remain dead in trespasses and sins, and under the reigning power of unbelief?

I cannot detain you with the consideration of all the places in which a call thus effectual is either expressed or intimated; let me, however, just refer you to two or three of this character. Thus Paul, in his second Epistle

to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God, who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Here is a calling evidently peculiar to believers and connected with salvation; a calling according to God's purpose and grace, given in Christ before the world began. Thus, too, the same Apostle, in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto" (or to which state) "he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Three things are here distinctly affirmed: first, that God had, from the beginning or from everlasting, chosen these persons to salvation; secondly, that he had chosen them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; and thirdly, that to this state of salvation he had called them by the Gospel, but manifestly not by the Gospel alone, for they were called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, not in the sense of being invited to it simply, but of being qualified for it, and by promise entitled to it.

Judge ye, now, whether there be not a calling of the Spirit which is sovereign and effectual—a calling which is the fruit of God's electing love, and which takes place with regard to all those who are brought to believe unto salvation. It is this which is primarily respected by the Apostles when they speak of the high vocation of believers, their holy and heavenly calling, and their calling out of darkness into God's marvellous light. But suppose we had mistaken the use



term in the passages we have considered—a point, perhaps, which we should not very readily concede—yet suppose it were the fact, the doctrine we have set up in this discourse would be no less plain and indubitable, viz.: that there is a work of the Holy Spirit, call it by what name you will, which is invincible in its nature, and which is by way of eminence the true and proper cause of men's repenting and believing, or complying with the terms of the Gospel. What else can we make of such a declaration as this? "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," (James i. 18.) The Apostle had just said, "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning;" and then adds, "Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth," as if nothing could be more free and sovereign than this operation, and nothing more entirely and absolutely God's work. Again: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even when we were dead in sins, according to this, did the love of God find us. But what did this love do? It quickened us together with Christ; that is, raised us up from a death of sin to a life of holiness. But perhaps this spiritual resurrection was the consequence of faith? How can this be, when faith itself is rather a consequence of this spiritual quickening, or, at any rate, is involved in it? Hence, says the Apostle, in the words which follow: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that (that thing) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Certainly, then, if we

are his workmanship, we are not our own workmanship, and we do but disparage the riches of his grace, if we pretend that we are. What could be more decisive than this very passage of the doctrine we have advocated in this Lecture, that it is wholly owing to the work of the Divine Spirit that men believe unto life eternal?

The same truth is taught in all those passages which speak of God as circumcising the heart, taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh; of his putting his fear in the hearts of men, and writing his law there; in short, as working in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure. So it must be, if man is totally depraved by nature, or if the carnal mind be enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. For whence should there come into the heart of man that which is truly good, if not from the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit? Or have we now to learn that when men are regenerated, it is partly of themselves, and partly from the Spirit of God? So taught not our blessed Lord, when he said, "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." So taught not his Apostle, when he said, that "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." But I have done when I have remarked, that though it is God that works all our good in us and for us, and though our graces are but the fruits of his Spirit, yet there is no constraint upon our faculties, nor are we dragged into his kingdom against our wills, but only made willing in the day of his power. This is the creed of our Church, and, I doubt not, the doctrine of the Bible; but you must examine and judge for yourselves. Some of the objections which are offered against our view of the subject, we propose hereafter to consider.



## LECTURE XVI.

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### ON EFFECTUAL CALLING.

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IN a preceding Lecture we considered the doctrine of effectual calling, as it is embraced in our standards, and, as we believe, maintained in the Scriptures. In an effectual call we included the whole work of conviction and conversion—all that is done by the Holy Spirit in turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God. We did not assert, nor do we believe, that this work is accomplished without the use of means. God's kingdom is pre-eminently a kingdom of means. Both in the natural and moral world, we perceive him carrying forward a system of operations through the medium of second causes, or in connection with them. And this is nowhere more true than in the work of our salvation, where the Word and ordinances of God are among the stated means he employs. Yet none of these means would prove effectual without the agency of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit which thoroughly convinces men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; the Spirit which enlightens them in the knowledge of Christ, and shows them the necessity of a vital union to him, if they would secure the pardon of sin and eternal life. Still this is not done without the instrumentality of the Word. They who never hear of Christ without, never hear of him within; for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." It is the office of the Spirit, having enlightened the mind and renewed the

will, to persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered to us in the Gospel. As to the simple act of renewing the will, if anything is meant by it different from giving the will a right direction in view of the objects presented, we would not contend for the use of means. But if, as some able writers suppose, this language implies no more than giving the will a new direction, or efficiently determining it to choose that which is good, then it seems that the Word is concerned as an instrument of this change, if it be only in furnishing an object on which the right choice terminates. Be this as it may, it is sufficient for our purpose to have it understood that effectual calling is not one single act, but a series of acts; or, more properly, a work including both conviction and conversion—a work which is never accomplished without the instrumentality of the Word. Hence we read: "Of his own will begat he us by the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." And hence, also, it is said: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he hath called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That there is an outward call common to all where the Gospel comes, and that this call is sincere and urgent, we hold to be just as certain as that Jesus Christ commanded his Disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature, without distinction of nation or condition. And that there is an inward call separate from this—a call of the Spirit, which becomes effectual in all the subjects of it, by causing them to comply with the terms of the Gospel—we no more doubt than we doubt the truth of the Bible, or that there is any such thing as salvation provided for any of the guilty children of men.

In support of this truth we directed our attention to such passages as these: "And we know that all things"

work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified them he also glorified." "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," \* \* "that no flesh should glory in his presence." "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God which hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Such a call, we remarked, was verified in the case of Zaccheus the publican, and of Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom; of Saul of Tarsus, when Jesus met him under the walls of Damascus, and of the thousands who repented and believed on the day of Pentecost.

A like call, though under a different name, we showed was clearly indicated in those forms of expression which set forth our conversion under the figure of a new birth, a new creation, and a resurrection from the dead. But if the Scriptures were less express on the point, we contended that the doctrine could not reasonably be denied, so long as it is evident that the heart of man is totally depraved by nature, every thought and imagination being evil and only evil continually. For whence should a different temper and spirit be derived, if not from the effectual working of the Divine power—a power declared



to be according to God's mighty power, which he wrought in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places? Can we believe such a power necessary without questioning the sufficiency of all human help? Can we believe such a power exerted, and the subject of it after all remain in the grave of sin and unbelief? Or if we suppose the mighty power of God to be concerned in raising men from a death of sin, can we imagine that they do really assist him in this work, beginning with him and carrying on a co-ordinate operation? What can darkness do towards producing light? and what will a selfish heart accomplish towards the production of true benevolence? No stream ever flows higher than its fountain; and no tree ever brings forth fruit different from or in opposition to its nature. But against this whole statement many are prepared to make objections.

*First.* It wars against the liberty of the creature, and either supposes or makes him a machine.

*Second.* It teaches sinners that they must wait until the moving of the waters, or until God works upon them, and that all means of course are useless; nay,

*Third.* That if God work in some and not in others, he is partial and properly a respecter of persons, contrary to his own declaration. And,

*Fourth.* Finally, if the doctrine now stated be true, it ought not to be preached, since it tends only to confound and discourage, and will naturally lead to licentiousness.

Nothing is easier than to make objections; nor is there a truth in the Bible which cannot be assailed in a plausible manner by the secret workings of unbelief, or by "the subtle craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive." But what will all our objections amount to if they stand opposed to the revealed truth of God? Many objected to the doctrines which Christ himself taught; and charged him sometimes with contradiction, and

sometimes with blasphemy ; but their objections, though very confidently urged, did not nullify the truth, nor induce our Lord either to take back or modify his words. The same thing occurred in relation to his Apostles. They advanced things which many could not receive, and to which they attached by way of objection the most horrible consequences, thereby overthrowing the faith of some. Nevertheless, the truth of God was not overthrown ; nor can it now be, however numerous or plausible the objections which men may urge against it. Our great concern should be rightly to interpret God's Word, and to receive it precisely in that sense in which the Holy Spirit manifestly intended it ; and though difficulties should be raised which we cannot easily solve, they should not abate our confidence in the Divine testimony. The Word of the Lord abideth forever, and his salvation from generation to generation ; while they who oppose it are condemned to consume away. "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool."

But let us in the spirit of candor examine the objections which are brought against the doctrine of an effectual call.

*First.* We are told by some that it militates against the liberty of the creature, and either makes or supposes him a machine. But how so ? What does an effectual call do but make men *willing* to obey the Gospel, who before were *unwilling* ? It removes their aversion to God, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts. It takes away the heart of stone, and gives an heart of flesh. But what constraint is there here which stands opposed to moral liberty ? Does not the renewed soul act freely in repenting and believing, in loving and obeying the truth ? Every child of God knows that he is perfectly free and voluntary in all his gracious exercises. Nor can we conceive how God's working in him to will ope-

rates against his freedom, unless you suppose that because God works in him to will, therefore he does not will; which is as repugnant to the Bible as to common sense.

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” said the Almighty Father to the Son, which implies that they should be willing, in consequence of his power exerted to make them willing, and who are we that we should oppose our notions of human liberty to the positive declarations of God.

But what is human liberty? I speak of that liberty which is essential to every free and accountable agent. Does it imply anything more or less, than a power of willing or choosing? or of being the subject of voluntary exertion? We say of a man, he is rational when he *reasons*; and, with the same propriety, we say that a man is voluntary when he *wills*. We need not inquire into the cause. Whatever that may be it alters not the *fact*. It is still true, that he who reasons is rational, and he who wills is voluntary. Doubtless there is a cause in both cases, and a cause adequate to the effect, unless we adopt one of two absurdities, either that an effect can exist without a cause, or that the actions of creatures are not effects. With respect to all holy actions, the Scriptures are express in pointing out the cause.\* They tell us it is God that works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure. They tell us that all true believers are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and that all the exercises or graces of the new man are the fruits of the Spirit; and that for the very purpose of producing them the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers, and works in them by a power which is almighty. “But,” says the objector, “then their wills are certainly determined in one way;

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\* The ultimate, the controlling cause.

then it becomes necessary that they should will and act as they do, and how is this compatible with their freedom?" I ask, how does it destroy their freedom? Do they not will? And what other idea can we have of a free agent, but of one that wills or acts voluntarily? Must there be no previous certainty in men's actions, no motives which certainly determine them to act in one way rather than another, in order to their being free? Were it so, the very foreknowledge of God would destroy men's freedom; or must there be a state of indifference, a freedom from all inclination either to good or to evil, to constitute men free? If this were the fact, sinners are not free, who, by nature, are under a strong and habitual inclination to do evil; and if not free, they are not accountable, and God is unrighteous who taketh vengeance. If this were the fact, the saints and angels in heaven are not free; nor even Jehovah himself, who is perpetually and unchangeably inclined to do right, and cannot possibly do wrong. And to affirm that there is no freedom in heaven, is the same thing as to say that there is no virtue there.

The simple and unvarnished truth on this subject is, that God works all our good in us, but in a way which does no violence to our faculties. He enlightens our understandings, and we see; he inclines our hearts to the right way, and we choose it; he draws us, and we run after him; and though this is done by an agency which is effectual, yet it in no degree militates against our freedom. His action in this case is indeed the cause of our action. Still it is true that we act, and act freely in the full possession of all our powers. It is God who sheds abroad his love in the heart, but we who love. It is God who gives repentance, but we who repent; God who gives faith, but we who believe; and so of all other graces.

But what if God does not impart these graces? Why,



it is certain that we shall never have them. They are fruits which are not formed in nature's garden ; they are fruits which grow not upon our native stock, till it is engrafted with a scion from above. How then, you will ask, are we to blame if we never possess them ? If they are God's gift, and he does not see fit to bestow them, can we help it ? And will he condemn us for not being what his grace alone can make us ? This is the very pith of the controversy which every unregenerate soul has with God ; every one, I mean, whose heart is awake to this subject. And I should show my ignorance of the depth of human depravity, if I supposed that I could at once clear away the difficulty, and satisfy the complaining heart upon this point.

Two things, however, are certain, whether men can receive them or not, that God is righteous who taketh vengeance, and that he will take vengeance on those who shall live and die in a state of unbelief.

But how could God be righteous in taking vengeance on the unbeliever unless his unbelief were a sin, and how could unbelief be a sin, unless faith and its attendant graces were a duty ? It is plain from the Scripture, that men are bound to repent and believe, and to yield universal obedience to the Gospel. But what is the foundation of this obligation ? Why, says the Arminian, if they will do the best they can with their wicked hearts, God will give them his grace, and enable them to repent and believe. But this is manifestly a departure from the Bible. There is not one promise of grace to the graceless endeavors of unrenewed men in all the book of God. And if there were, it would not be their immediate duty to repent and believe, but only to use the means to get faith and repentance, which might be at the end of one year, or of ten years. But the language of God to sinners is, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts"—"Behold now is the

accepted time." He says nothing of to-morrow; nay, "God now requireth all men everywhere to repent." The command no sooner reaches them than their obligation is complete. If they live in impenitence another moment they violate the command, and dying in this state, they will bring down a double vengeance upon their heads. But still the question returns, what is the foundation of their obligation to repent or believe? I answer, the command of God. If you ask why this command binds, I reply, because we are complete moral agents, though fallen, and the duty enjoined is such as becomes a righteous God to require of creatures possessing our capacity, and placed in our condition. This is the footing on which God's Word puts this subject from beginning to end, and here will conscience place it in a dying hour. To make our duty to repent or believe to depend in any measure upon the gift of the Spirit, is to overthrow God's law, and to annihilate the grace of the Gospel. It overturns God's law. Because such a position goes upon the absurd principle that we are bound to obey God only where we have a heart, and to obey him in such degree only as we have that heart. What becomes then of his authority? Our dispositions are the only measure and rule of our conduct. I need not say that here is no law, unless you would call that a law which licenses every one to do as he pleases.

It annihilates the grace of the Gospel. For if we are not bound to repent and believe, whether God grant us his Spirit or not, then God cannot, in justice, call us to repentance or faith unless he send his Spirit to work these tempers in us. And what is this, but to make the gift of the Holy Spirit in his sanctifying power (one of the freest and richest of God's favors) a matter of debt, and not of mercy or grace? But putting aside this train of reasoning, let me make the appeal directly to every man's bosom, if anything can be more just and reason-

able than the requisitions which God makes upon us ? He requires us to love him who is infinitely lovely ; to be thankful to him from whom all our blessings flow ; to fear him who is clothed with eternal power and justice ; and to trust in him whose mercy is revealed in the Gospel, and whose truth, having its foundations deeper than the everlasting mountains, is absolutely inviolable. Wherein we have done wrong, he requires us to be sorry for that wrong, and with unfeigned sincerity to forsake it. Is there anything hard or unjust in all this ? Does not every one of these requirements approve itself to our reason and conscience ? And still it is a truth, demonstrated by experience as well as by the Word of God, that such is our depravity that we shall never truly comply with one of these commands, unless we are enlightened and sanctified from above. Our duty and our dependence are both obvious, nor do they in the least degree clash with each other. Let us never more hear, then, that our dependence on God destroys our liberty and accountability, or converts us into machines. The fact is, if we were machines, we should have no duty to perform, and of course should require no special aid to perform it. Nor should we require any aid as it is—I mean any peculiar and special aid—if it were not for our deep-rooted depravity, which renders us disinclined to the duties which God has most justly demanded.

*Second.* But again, it is said that the doctrine of an effectual call teaches sinners that they have nothing to do but to sit down and wait for the operations of the Spirit. If it is God who begins with sinners, and God who by his sovereign and almighty grace converts them, it is of no use for them to attempt anything ; they may as well read a novel as the Bible, as well visit the tavern and playhouse as the courts of the Lord, as well curse their God and look upward as to bow their knees before him in prayer. Two things are taken for granted in this ob-

jection, which are utterly and manifestly false. First, that because God works in men to will and to do, therefore they are not bound to do anything till he does work. And secondly, that God does not work by means.

The first thing taken for granted in this objection is, that because God works in men to will and to do of his good pleasure, they are not bound to do anything until he does work. But are not men moral agents and under law to God as we have before shown, and as every man's conscience will compel him to acknowledge? And if so, are they not bound to do all that God requires without delay, and without taking into view any other consideration but his command, as the ground of their obedience? Their obligation is full and complete, whether he grant them the aids of his special grace or not, nor does their obligation depend in the smallest degree upon this circumstance; otherwise his law is a dead letter, and his grace no longer grace. So far, then, is it from being true that sinners have nothing to do until God works in them, that they have everything to do which the Gospel enjoins; and if they neglect it for a single moment, it is at the awful peril of eternal death. So it must be; or God must give up his government over his rational creatures, because they have rebelled against him, and are madly disposed to persist in their rebellion. But let men beware how they tread upon this ground. God is jealous for his name, and will vindicate the rights and honors of his government though millions perish in hell to all eternity, as the just and fearful consequence. It is an easy thing now for the sinner to plead his moral impotence as his excuse, and to find fault with God for not giving him grace to comply with the terms of the Gospel. But when God shall awake to the judgment he will convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, and of all the wicked thoughts and hard speeches which



they have indulged against him. The light of eternity will dispel the delusion, and they will see with eyes never to be closed, that God is in the right and they in the wrong—that all his commandments are holy, just and good—and that they are utterly without excuse, for not having yielded to them a ready and cheerful compliance.

The other position assumed in this objection, and which is plainly void of all foundation is, that God does not work by means. For if he does work by means, how can it be true that it will signify nothing for the sinner to attempt anything, or to put himself in the way of means? How can it be true, that he may as well be in the tavern or playhouse, as in the house of the Lord? That he is as likely to go to heaven by pouring contempt upon God's Word, as by seriously and prayerfully reading it, and so of other means which God employs to convey truth to the mind, and to stir up the conscience of the sinner. I admit that God sometimes works without means, that is, without the stated and ordinary means of reading and hearing his Word, calling upon his name, and receiving instruction from the conversation and pious examples of others. I have known men struck under conviction in the ball room, at the card table, and while fearless of God's majesty, uttering the most awful oaths and imprecations. Sometimes by an accidental word dropt in conversation from the lips of a child, or from one who had not the remotest design of administering reproof or conviction. Saul was convicted, and converted, too, on his way to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the followers of Jesus. But what then? These are facts, out of the ordinary course, and occur chiefly to illustrate the efficacy and sovereignty of Divine grace. They establish no rule for judging of probabilities. We cannot argue from them that means are of no avail. On the contrary, we are certain

that means are of high importance in the matter of our salvation. We know it from the positive declarations of God himself, because he tells us, "that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" and that it is by the foolishness of preaching, (or what men call foolishness,) it pleases him to save them that believe. We know it from the general course of his providence. We see persons brought under conviction of sin, from their attendance upon the means of God's appointment; we see them brought out of darkness into his marvelous light, while attending upon the same means. We see the Lord's people, built up in their most holy faith, becoming more firmly rooted in the doctrines of the cross, and waxing stronger and stronger in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, through the agency of means; and this is the steady course of things from generation to generation. Nay, we are assured from well-founded observation, that they who are most constant and most serious in their attendance upon the means of God's ordaining, are most likely—other things being equal—to receive the quickening power of his grace. So it is reasonable to expect, if God will honor his own institutions and has not established them in vain. How presumptuous and how dangerous is it, then, for any man to say, If God does not work, I will not work; if he does not begin with me, I will neglect his institutions, and despise his sovereign authority. What is this but to adopt the language of ancient contemners of God's mercy, "No, there is no hope; I have loved strangers, and after them will I go?" How righteous a thing would it be with God to say of such persons, Let them alone; in a little while I will begin a work with them which shall never have an end, a work of wonder and astonishment, a work of terror and of wrath.

But do not mistake the purport of these remarks. While we hold that there is vastly more hope of those

who solemnly and prayerfully consider their state as sinners, who tremble at the awful denunciations of God's wrath against the wicked, and who diligently attend upon the means of instruction; I say, while we hold there is vastly more hope of persons in these circumstances, than of the thoughtless and inconsiderate, who either do not attend upon the means of God's appointment, or attend in a very careless and heartless manner, yet our hope is not founded in any degree upon the idea, that they are growing better, or in the temper of their minds approximating to a state of holiness. Nor yet upon the supposition that they are doing anything to which a promise of renewing grace is annexed, for we openly maintain that there is no such promise made in the Bible to the doings of unrenewed men. Our hope arises simply from the fact, that the Lord is dealing with them in a special way, or that they are found in attendance upon those means through which he ordinarily dispenses the blessings of his grace.

*Third.* Let me hold your attention a few moments longer, while we consider briefly the objection so often raised against the effectual calling of believers, that it makes God a respecter of persons.

Popular as this objection is, it is in reality the most futile of all, and is founded entirely upon a misconception or perversion of terms. Let any man once settle in his mind what it is to be a respecter of persons, and this objection will vanish into thin air. I know of no candid and well-informed Arminian who pretends to offer it. What is the point here objected to? Why, that God does more for some than others; which is certainly true if he call some by his special and almighty grace to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth, and does not thus call all. But while we maintain this fact here stated, we deny that God is a respecter of persons. To be a respecter of persons is wholly a distinct thing from

making a difference among individuals in the distribution of favors. The expression has no sense analogous to this, neither in the Word of God, nor in any writer of acknowledged correctness, either ancient or modern. To have respect to persons is to prefer one man to another on some improper account: "as when a judge acquits a criminal because he is rich or powerful, or is his friend or relation," while he would have condemned him if none of these circumstances had been permitted to bias his mind and to pervert the course of justice. Take another example. I owe two men an equal sum of money, and their claims on me are equally strong for immediate payment; but because one is my friend, and I look to him for some future accommodation, I pay him at his call, and refuse to pay the other. In this case I should be a respecter of persons, and a perverter of justice. But where justice is not concerned, where no rights are contravened by my giving or withholding, there is no room for exercising this kind of partiality. There I cannot be a respecter of persons, distribute my bounty as I will.

Dr. Whitby, who is known to be a violent opposer of the doctrine of sovereign and efficacious grace, very justly observes, "that the bestowing of such benefits as are merely gratuitous and undeserved, does not argue a respect of persons; neither is it respect of persons to prefer one before another when we have a right and it is our pleasure so to do."

This is in exact coincidence with the Bible, which always uses this term in relation to matters of right, and generally in relation to the administration of justice. Thus in the nineteenth of Leviticus: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not *respect* the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." And again in Deut. i.: "Ye shall not *respect* persons in judgment,

but ye shall hear the small as well as the great." 2 Chron. xix. 6: "And he said to the judges, take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor *respect* of persons, nor taking of gifts." So in Proverbs: "It is not good to have *respect* to persons in judgment." This is the current use of the phrase throughout the Old Testament, and with which the New perfectly corresponds. Thus in the tenth of Acts Peter says, "of a truth I perceive that God is no *respector of persons*; but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him"—that is, he treats every man according to his character, whether he be Jew or Gentile, and not according to his outward condition and external relations. If he be a truly good man he will accept him to favor; if he be otherwise, he will not accept him. But this he does in the quality of a righteous Judge; and to name but one passage more: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no *respect* of persons with God."

These passages are too plain to need comment. They teach in the most decisive manner, that having *respect* to persons is a thing totally distinct from gratuitously conferring favors, that it relates to matters of justice and equity only, and is merely the perversion of justice, or the contravention of right. And if it were not so, God would certainly be a *respector* of persons. If bestowing

more upon one than another would lay a foundation for this charge—what should we say to his making one man rich and another poor—of his endowing one with all the blessings of an ingenious and well-cultivated mind, and raising another but one degree above idiocy? What should we say to his sending the Gospel to one nation and not to another, leaving millions to perish in the darkness of pagan idolatry, while the light of salvation shines upon others? But we forbear: God claims it as his prerogative to do what he will with his own; and whether men contend or submit, he will exercise this prerogative. Nothing, surely, is more entirely his own than the gifts and callings of his grace. These he will bestow when and where he pleases, and often upon the most unworthy. It was in view of this sovereign prerogative that Jesus once said, “I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things,” &c.

But how appalling, says one, are these expressions; and how discouraging the truth they seem to convey.

*Fourth.* Would it not be better to conceal this *sovereign* and *discriminating* grace of God, admitting that it is found in the Bible, seeing many are offended with it, and not a few who abuse it, perhaps, to their own destruction?

I have not time to make a full reply to this objection. But it is enough to say, are we wiser than God? He has proclaimed his *discriminating* grace by the mouth of Apostles and Prophets, nay, by the mouth of his own dear Son. He has proclaimed it in his providence for the space of six thousand years, and is every day proclaiming it in the events before our eyes. The different moral conditions of those whom we see around us, are a solemn and expressive testimony of God to this truth. Who are we then, brethren, that we should withstand God? As for me, I dare not—for my own soul’s sake—

nor for the sake of your souls. Let us, then, be found faithful in receiving and maintaining the truths which his wisdom and goodness have revealed, and let us pray with renewed fervor for his Holy Spirit to make them effectual to our salvation, and the salvation of others.



## LECTURE XVII.

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### ON JUSTIFICATION.

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#### WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

**THE** answer given in the Shorter Catechism is, “Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.” In the Confession of Faith, Chapter XI., this doctrine is expressed more fully thus: “Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth—not by infusing righteousness into them,” (an opinion of the Church of Rome,) “but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them, as their righteousness, but by imparting the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.” This faith, however, which is the alone instrument of justification, is declared “not to be alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.” With this statement agree the Articles of the



Church of England. "We are accounted righteous before God," says their eleventh Article, "only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." We present these ancient symbols, not so much as a matter of authority, though well entitled to regard, as to give a clear and concise view of the subject, and the high importance attached to it by the great and good in other days. I know of no errors which at different periods have troubled the Church either more subtle or more poisonous than those which relate to the doctrine of justification. All the powers of human ingenuity have been set to work to devise some scheme of acceptance with God different from that which is revealed in the Bible. For many hundred years antecedent to the Reformation, men were taught to trust to pilgrimages and penances—to almsgiving—to the prayers of saints and the senseless homage paid to their relics—to an ascetic and monastic life—to everything, in short, but to the foundation which God has laid in Zion, the meritorious obedience and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. On no point, therefore, did the great Reformers labor more than to recover and establish the true doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer. This they considered as so vital to the Gospel scheme, that Christianity without it was only a smoother way to the gates of perdition. "On this article alone," said the famous Martin Luther, "stands or falls the Church." Happy would it have been for the Protestant world, had this doctrine been left undisturbed upon the foundation on which it was placed by the Reformers—a foundation plainly revealed in the Bible, and full of hope and consolation. But human pride, which loves to plume itself with its own imaginary merits, could not brook a doctrine which strips

man so entirely of all ideas of personal worthiness, and makes his salvation from first to last a matter of mere grace—the deliverance of a culprit from justly-deserved punishment, while all the good he receives is bestowed wholly out of regard to the righteousness of another. The consequence has been, men have perverted this doctrine. They have taken the crown from the head of Christ, and placed it upon that of a guilty rebel. Instead of laying down the righteousness of the Saviour as the only meritorious ground of justification before God, they have brought in the system of human contrition and human endeavor as making a part, and a prominent part, of that righteousness, on account of which a sinner is to hope for the absolving sentence and final approbation of his Judge. And I lament to state that this spurious notion of justification is to be found not only in churches which are professedly Arminian, and where the sentiment is openly avowed and defended, but in other churches also. The truth is, our fallen nature loves that system which allows to it a part of the glory of our salvation ; while it feels a repugnance to everything whereby God is exalted and man is laid low. Hence it comes to pass that, in every country where the Gospel has been preached, a disposition has been shown to reject the righteousness which is of God, and to seek justification as it were by the works of the law. We know it was so with the great body of the Jews in the time of Christ and his Apostles. We know it was so with many in the early Christian churches, which led St. Paul to oppose this error so pointedly and laboriously in his epistles to the churches of Rome and Galatia. So fundamental indeed did he consider this error, that he declared those who received and propagated it as accursed, because they subverted the Gospel of Christ. In the remarks which I shall submit on this subject, I propose to consider :

*First.* What is *implied* in our being justified before God.

*Second.* What that righteousness is, on account of which God justifies us.

*Third.* What is intended by the *imputation* of this righteousness.

*Fourth.* The *nature* of a justifying faith and its *influence* in the matter of justification.

*Fifth.* Wherein it appears that we are justified freely by God's grace.

*First.* What is implied in our being justified before God. To justify a man in the sense in which the term is often used, both in the Scriptures and in common life, is to vindicate his innocence in a matter where he has been supposed guilty. Thus Job says, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me;" and again, when speaking to his friends, "God forbid that I should justify you," that is, that I should vindicate your conduct, or sustain your cause. We read of Wisdom's being justified of her children, and of all the people's justifying God. Here, to justify, is simply to declare one innocent, or to vindicate him from some supposed impeachment.

To justify, in the language of human judicatories, is to acquit the accused of the crime alleged, and to declare him rectus or just in the eye of the law. This is a frequent use of the term in the Bible, and perhaps may be regarded as its original and primary use. But in neither of these senses can it be said that God justifies the sinner when he pardons and restores him to favor. He surely does not vindicate the sinner's innocence, or declare him not guilty of the offences he stands charged with in the eye of the law. This could not be done consistently with the truth of facts. These offences exist, and it will remain eternally true that they exist; nor can there a time come in which it will not be equally true that the



sinner who committed them deserves to be punished. He may be forgiven, and his liability to punishment removed ; but his desert of punishment is as indelible as his being, and can no more be destroyed, than the fact of his transgression. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that God, whose judgment is according to truth, will either judge or declare the sinner to be righteous, viewed as a moral agent, and as he stands related to the Divine law ; for he will not judge or declare him to be what he is not. He may treat him as though he were righteous, by not reckoning sin to his account, or rather by not punishing him for his sin, and by bestowing upon him important benefits. But the state of facts does not admit of the sinner's being declared righteous in the eye of the law, making that the rule of judgment, since, by that rule, he is most certainly and justly condemned. I know it has been supposed, that though the law condemns him, in his own personal character, it justifies him in the character of a believer, and as he stands related to Christ, who is his head. But our doctrine is, that the law neither knows nor can know him in any other character than his own. It considers him merely as a subject of God's moral government, and while it ascertains his duties and relations, it determines his merit or demerit. The law, strictly speaking, knows nothing of Christ, and contains no provision for justifying or condemning men, but that which is found in its precepts and penalties. If men were to be justified by the law, as would have been the case had not the terms of the first covenant been broken, it must be by the deeds of the law ; and their justification would be the sentence of the supreme Judge, declaring them to be righteous according to the law. This, we admit, would be a legal and forensic transaction. But the justification proposed in the Gospel, is different from this. Here, it is not justifying the righteous whom the law approves, but the ungodly whom the

law condemns. God, in justifying men, therefore, in this way, does not proceed according to law, but as a sovereign Judge, acts above law in the same manner as the supreme magistrate acts above law, when he pardons a man condemned by the criminal laws of his country. The law is not overlooked in this case, for then no pardon could be needed or dispensed. But the penalty of the law is set aside, as an act of mercy, vouchsafed by the power or authority of the supreme executive. Here, every one can see that the transgressor is neither considered nor declared to be righteous; so far from it, that his guilt is acknowledged in the very act of pardon. What is done is simply to reverse the sentence of condemnation, or, if you please, to remit the punishment, and restore the criminal to favor.

Thus it is, substantially, when God pardons and justifies the sinner. He does not consider or declare him righteous in the eye of the law, but he treats him, in two important respects, as if he were; he acquits him from condemnation, and entitles him to life.

We do not pretend that the cases are precisely parallel; but their agreement is sufficiently obvious in the point to be illustrated. In both cases, the guilty escape punishment, not by the ordinary forms of judicial process, not by being considered or declared righteous, but by being forgiven, in a way consistent with the public good, and by an authority competent to dispense this mercy.

These remarks are intended to show that Gospel justification is not the same as legal justification—while yet such a resemblance exists between them as to warrant the use of a legal or forensic term. By overlooking this circumstance, and by supposing that the justification under the Gospel is to be explained solely by a reference to human tribunals, many have made the whole business of our pardon and acceptance with God a mere legal process.

This, we conceive, is in no degree warranted by the language of the Bible. There we are not said to be justified by the law, nor according to the law, but to be justified by faith without the deeds of the law; while the righteousness of God therein is said to be manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. But, though not justified by the law, still it is important to remark that the law is not overlooked in the matter of our justification. It did not become the holiness and justice of the Supreme Lawgiver to justify the sinner till the violated law had been magnified and made honorable, both in its precept and penalty. This was done by Christ, when he obeyed and suffered in our stead; and this being done, the door was opened to extend two benefits to the believing sinner—to wit, pardon and eternal life—both of which are comprehended in the act of justification.

That justification is thus extensive, including the benefits now mentioned, may be seen from the following passages: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." To have peace with God is more than to be delivered from wrath. It implies a state of favor and acceptance, which involves in it the blessing of eternal life: and therefore the Apostle adds, in the following verse: "By whom also" that is, by Christ, "we have access unto this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." And again: "But God commendeth his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Much more then being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." That this salvation by Christ's life includes in it the immortal happiness of the soul, as the fruit of justification, seems perfectly certain from the fol-

lowing declaration in the same chapter : " For the judgment was by one to condemnation ; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if, by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together, as blessings jointly obtained by faith in the Redeemer ; and Christ speaks of passing from death unto life as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to a state of condemnation : " Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Which leads me to a single remark more on the nature of justification—to wit : that it is absolute, and not conditional, as some have suggested. By which I mean, that justification once passed upon the sinner is passed forever. The eternal Judge, when he absolves him and grants him a title to life, does not do it hypothetically—suspending the favor or the continuance of it, upon conditions yet to be performed, and which are in themselves uncertain. When he forgives the penitent and believing, it is with a promise that he will remember their sins and iniquities no more ; when he bestows on them the gift of righteousness and the consequent title to eternal life, he neither repents of it nor takes it back again. But the consoling language he holds to each of them is : " I will be thy God, and thou shalt be my son."

The perpetuity of this privilege is clearly implied in the promises, " he that believeth shall be saved ;" " and he that believeth, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." For where would the truth of such promises be, if eternal life were not infallibly connected with the very first act of faith. But the

Scriptures are everywhere exceedingly explicit on this subject. They declare "that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," whose character it is "to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." That those whom God predestinates to be conformed to the image of his Son, he calls; and whom he calls he justifies, and whom he justifies, them also he glorifies. And in the assurance that all who receive justification will continue in this state, the Apostle puts this challenge: "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." But what if these justified persons were to cease to believe and to obey the Gospel? Would not the sentence of condemnation return, and they fall under the weight of God's vengeance? Undoubtedly. But this is an event which can never happen. God hath said of all those with whom he makes his new and everlasting covenant, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people;" and again, "I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Depart they would, if left to themselves; but they are kept by the power of God "through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." We hold that they, and they only, who endure unto the end, will be saved; but we maintain that all true believers will thus endure, because God, that cannot lie, hath said it, and because we doubt neither his power nor his mercy. Jesus, who knows our weakness, and who through that weakness perfects his own strength, has declared, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall



never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "My father which gave them me is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my father's hand." Nothing can be more decisive. But though none can pluck them out of God's hand, may they not fall, or thrust themselves out? No, my brethren. Because it is plain, if they might fall, or thrust themselves out, others might be the instruments of their fall. For there is no sin which we do or can commit, to which others may not tempt us. But besides, whether of themselves alone or through the agency of others, were they to fall out of Christ's hands, they would perish, which is contrary to our Lord's assertion in the passage that they shall never perish.

Relying, then, on the covenanted security which God has given us on this point, may we not say with the Apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors;" through whom? ourselves or our fellow-Christians? No, "through him that loved us," and called us into this grace as the fruit of this love. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Having thus explained the nature of justification as it is, an act of God absolving the sinner from the sins or from the punishment due to them, and bestowing upon him real and unfailing title to eternal life, I proceed, in the

*Second* place, to consider what that righteousness is, on account of which God justifies us. Be assured, brethren, God will not justify us without a righteousness, nor without a righteousness which does honor to his

law, and sets its authority high in the sight of the universe; and it is, perhaps, for this reason chiefly, that our pardon and acceptance with him takes the name of justification. But the question here is, what is that righteousness? Most certainly, it cannot be our own perfect personal righteousness, according to the law. First, because we have no such righteousness, and secondly, because this is not the righteousness supposed or demanded in the justification of sinners, the law not being made the direct rule of judgment in the case: nor is it the righteousness of faith considered as a moral virtue. We read, indeed, of the righteousness of faith. We read that "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." And again: "That to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness." But still, we are not to suppose that faith and the fruits of it are, by the Gospel, substituted for a perfect legal righteousness. This, men are apt to suppose; they are prone to imagine, that as under the first covenant or the law of works, men were to be justified by a sinless obedience, so under the new covenant or the Gospel dispensation, they are to be justified by faith, and the sincere though imperfect obedience which attends it, making faith and its moral fruits to hold the same place under the Gospel that perfect obedience held under the law.

There are two important reasons why this view cannot be admitted. One is, that the righteousness which God regards as the ground of our justification, is declared to be a righteousness without works, which would not be true, if faith, as a moral virtue, were accepted as our righteousness; or, which is the same thing, if our imperfect obedience were substituted in the room of a perfect; for then, obedience, to a certain extent, would still be our righteousness, and the formal cause of our justification. It could not then be said, that "to him that worketh not is the reward

reckoned, and righteousness imputed." Because, here is a work, though an imperfect work, laid as the foundation of our acceptance with God.

But a more obvious and important reason why we cannot admit that faith—considered as a moral virtue, or as an act of obedience—is the righteousness which God imputes to men for their justification, is, that the Scriptures distinctly speak of another righteousness as the foundation of this mercy; and it would be absurd to suppose that they speak of two.

They declare that Christ's righteousness is the meritorious ground of a sinner's pardon and acceptance with God. Thus Paul, in the fifth of Romans: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." This passage alone proves that Christ's righteousness, and that only, is the true and proper ground of a sinner's justification before God. But the Bible holds a similar language in other places. Christ is called by the Prophets, God's righteous branch which he was to raise up unto the house of David; God's righteous servant, by the knowledge of whom many should be justified, and the Lord, our righteousness. Daniel speaks of him as one who was to finish transgression, and make an end of sins; one who, having made reconciliation for iniquity, should bring in everlasting righteousness. What can this righteousness be, but the immediate fruit of his obe-

dience and death, when in our nature he fulfilled the precept and sustained the awful penalty of the Divine law? All that he did and suffered upon earth was at the command of the Father, and might, therefore, well take the name of righteousness. And we know, from the testimony of an Apostle, that it was by his doing God's will that a door was opened for being purged from our offences, and for receiving the promise of an eternal inheritance.

This righteousness of Christ is the righteousness of the Mediator, and embraces in it two things: satisfaction to the penalty, and obedience to the precept of the Divine law; or, to use the words of a great divine, It is both a negative and positive righteousness. It provides against the curse incurred by transgression, and it equally provides for the gift of eternal life. As one great whole, it lays a foundation for God to wipe away the remembrance of our sins, and to make us joint heirs with his Son of a crown of righteousness and glory which fadeth not away. This is the righteousness so often called the righteousness of God in the New Testament, and which is so called because it is eminently of God's providing, and a righteousness which he himself applies in the justification of sinners. This is the righteousness which is without the law, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets; the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; the righteousness which Paul wished to possess, "When he desired to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith." And because this righteousness magnifies the law, and opens the way for God to be just, (just to his own honor and to the interest of his government,) and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, Christ is said to be

the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Who can doubt, then, whether Christ's righteousness alone is the true and proper ground of a sinner's justification before God.

But I hear it said, Was not Abraham justified by faith? and is not his faith said to be imputed to him for righteousness? True: but how did his faith justify him? Not on the ground of its being a righteousness which was accepted in the room of a perfect legal righteousness; but as it united him to Christ, and thus brought him under the influence of his righteousness, as we shall have occasion to show in a subsequent part of this subject. He was not justified without faith, nor without a living, operative faith. But neither his faith nor his works were his justifying righteousness—that on account of which he was acquitted from punishment and entitled to reward. Had this been the case, it could not have been said, “that he had not whereof to glory.” There would, at least, have been some cause for his glorying before men, though not before God, if his faith or obedience had been made the true or formal ground of his acceptance. He might have pleaded his own moral worthiness as the cause of that distinction which God made between him and others; and it might be said of him that he both sought and obtained righteousness by his obedience, or as it were by the works of the law. But this is what the Apostle expressly declares to be the soul-destroying mistake of the Jews. They were not so blind as to suppose that no man could be justified before God, but upon the footing of a perfect personal righteousness. They knew that they were sinners, and therefore they offered the sacrifices of atonement which the law prescribed. But their error was in supposing that if they were in the main strict and zealous in the discharge of moral and ceremonial duties, this would stand for their righteousness, and that on account of it

God would overlook their failures and bestow upon them the reward of eternal life. It is to this precise fact that the Apostle directs our attention in the closing part of the ninth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, and in the beginning of the tenth: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after the law of righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." Mark the expression: "they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." He does not say by the works of the law simply, as if they were striving after a perfect legal righteousness. They knew as well as we do, that such a righteousness was unattainable. Still they made a righteousness of their own works, as thousands do at the present time, instead of looking solely to the righteousness of God's providing—the righteousness of the Redeemer. "For they stumbled," says the Apostle, "at that stumbling stone, [meaning Christ,] as it is written: Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." None could be more zealous and painstaking in religion than they, but their zeal, says the Apostle, is not according to knowledge; "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." They did not submit themselves to God's righteousness by submitting to Christ, and receiving him in his mediatorial character, as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Their whole reliance was upon their own good endeavors. They knew no other righteousness and sought no other. Here they stumbled and fell; and here have fall-

en thousands with the Word of Christ in their hands. From the self-righteous Pharisee to the man who is now doing as well as he can, trusting in God's mercy for the rest, the grand error has been to overlook the perfect righteousness of the Redeemer, as the only justifying righteousness of the sinner. But surely Paul did not overlook it, when speaking of God's justifying Abraham by faith, in opposition to works ; surely he did not mean to teach that though Abraham was not justified by a perfect legal righteousness, he was nevertheless justified by an imperfect one, as the Jews sought to be ; or, which is the same thing, that he was justified "as it were by the works of the law."

I must not longer trespass on your patience, and therefore I reserve the remainder of this subject for a future opportunity. Let me not conclude, however, until I have lifted up a warning voice against a spirit of self-righteousness. Make a Christ of nothing but Christ himself. There is much danger of doing this. Your faith in him must be direct, and your dependence on him exclusive and entire.



## LECTURE XVIII.

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### ON JUSTIFICATION.

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#### WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION ?

IN answering this question on a former occasion, you will recollect that I proposed the five following inquiries :

*First.* What is implied in our being justified before God ?

*Second.* What is the righteousness on account of which God justifies us ?

*Third.* What is intended by the imputation of this righteousness ?

*Fourth.* What is the nature of that faith which is concerned in our justification, and how is it concerned ?

*Fifth.* And lastly, wherein does it appear that we are justified freely by the grace of God ?

The first two of these inquiries have already been considered. In attending to the first, we remarked that to justify a man in common life, is to vindicate his innocence against any imagined or supposed impeachment ; but that in judicial proceedings the term has another import, and signifies to acquit the accused of the crime alleged, and formally to pronounce him just in the eye of the law. In neither of these senses did we suppose that God justifies the sinner, when he forgives. Surely, he does not vindicate the sinner's innocence, nor declare him not guilty, when compared with the law. This



could not be done consistently with the truth of facts. The sinner is a transgressor, or he would not need forgiveness ; and it will eternally remain true that he is a transgressor ; his desert is as indelible as his being, and can no more be destroyed than you can destroy the fact of his transgression. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that God will declare the sinner righteous, or judge him to be so, since he will not declare or judge him to be what he is not. Hence, we inferred that Gospel justification is not, in all respects, the same as legal justification, though it bears a resemblance to it. It is not pronouncing the sinner just in view of the law ; but treating him, in two important respects, as if he were—exempting him from punishment, and giving him a title to life. In legal justification, the law is made the rule of judgment, and according to this, sentence is pronounced in favor of the accused, and upon the ground of his personal innocence.

But in Gospel justification, the case is quite different. Here, it is not justifying the righteous whom the law approves, but the ungodly whom the law condemns. The law, of course, cannot be made the rule of judgment ; nor is sentence pronounced according to this rule. It must not be forgotten, however, that though the sinner is not justified by the law, or according to the law, yet the law is not overlooked in this case, nor its honor disregarded. It did not become Jehovah, as the moral Governor of the universe, to pardon the sinner and restore him to favor, until the law had been magnified and made honorable, by the meritorious obedience and sufferings of Christ. But this once done, the way was open to grant two important benefits to the believing sinner—remission of sin, and life everlasting. Both of these are respected in the act of justification ; an act, which having once passed upon the sinner, is past for-

ever. God does not justify him conditionally, but absolutely and finally; for whom he calls them he justifies, and whom he justifies them also he glorifies.

*Second.* As to the righteousness on account of which God justifies us, we attempted to show that it could not be our own personal righteousness according to the law: first, because we have no such righteousness; and secondly, because this is not the righteousness supposed or demanded in the justification of a sinner, the law not being the rule of judgment in the case. Nor did we allow it to be the righteousness of faith considered as a moral virtue, as though faith and the fruits of it held under the Gospel the same place as a perfect legal righteousness under the law. Men are exceedingly apt to suppose this; and many a self-righteous heart is still seeking justification, like the Jews of old, not by a perfect and sinless obedience, but by the merit of its own good endeavors, or, as it were, by the works of the law. Against this erroneous conception we urged two important considerations: first, that the righteousness which God regards as the true and proper ground of our justification, is declared to be a righteousness without works; which could not be true if faith or its fruits were accepted as our righteousness, and became the formal cause of our justification, since in that case our working, though an imperfect working, would still constitute the righteousness by which we are justified. But a more important reason why faith, as a work, cannot be admitted to hold the place of a justifying righteousness, we stated to be, that the Scriptures speak distinctly of another righteousness as occupying this place, and it would be absurd to suppose that they speak of two. They declare that Christ's righteousness is the meritorious ground of a sinner's acceptance with God. "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of

one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life: for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." And hence it is that Christ is called "the Lord our righteousness," and that, in the accomplishment of his mediatorial work, he is said "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." This righteousness, thus brought in, we endeavored to show, was the righteousness of Christ as Mediator, including both his sufferings and obedience—all that he did or suffered to honor the precept and to sustain the penalty of the Divine law; the righteousness so often called the righteousness of God in the New Testament, because it is eminently of his providing, and of his application in the justification of sinners; the righteousness which is without the law, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets; the righteousness which is unto all and upon all them that believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; the righteousness which Paul desired to have when he expressed his wish "to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith." This is a righteousness which will avail to the justification of all to whom it is imputed, and it is imputed to all who believe. We proceed, then, in the

*Third* place to inquire, what is intended by the imputation of this righteousness? Every one who admits that the righteousness of Christ is the meritorious ground of our acceptance with God must, to be consistent, admit that it is in some way imputed to us, or reckoned to our account. But the question is, how is it imputed, and what is the nature of this imputation? We answer: it

cannot be so imputed as to become our personal righteousness, and, on the score of justice, entitle us to an acquittal from condemnation. For in that case our justification would not be an act of grace, but of debt; but all true believers are justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It cannot be so imputed as to become our personal righteousness, for this farther reason: that there would then be no room for justifying the ungodly, but the righteous only, contrary to the declaration of the Apostle. Besides, the righteousness of one can never be so transferred as to become really and truly the righteousness of another. Sin and holiness, virtue and vice, are, in the very nature of things, personal. I cannot feel to blame for the sin of another, unless I am in some way a voluntary partaker of his sin; nor can I feel praiseworthy for the good deed of another, unless I am a voluntary partaker of that deed by some feeling or action of my own. It is easy to conceive, however, that I may be involved in the consequences of another's conduct, whether it be sinful or holy. His sin may subject me to heavy calamities, or his virtue procure for me many important benefits. Thus the transgression of Adam was followed with serious and eventful consequences to his posterity, yet his sin is no farther their sin, than they have virtually approved of his conduct. And thus the righteousness of Christ has procured the most important benefits. It avails to the believer justification, as fully as if the believer himself were righteous. God treats him, indeed, as though he were righteous. He exempts him from punishment, and grants him an unalienable title to an eternal inheritance. He receives, therefore, the same advantages from the Redeemer's righteousness as if it were his own, wrought by his own sinless obedience to the Divine law; and yet that righteousness is not his own in the same sense as if he himself had been obedient. He has not the

same consciousness of innocence, and he cannot be looked upon in the same light by other beings. He is, in his own proper character, a sinner, a pardoned sinner, and thus it will always appear to himself and to others. We say he is a pardoned sinner, but he is pardoned entirely on Christ's account. He is a justified sinner, but he is justified solely out of respect to Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to him, or reckoned to his account. But how is it imputed? In no other way but by giving him an interest in it, and making it available to his acceptance with God. His interest in this righteousness is secured by his believing on Christ, and becoming united to him in the most solemn and important of all relations.

The righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer much in the same manner as the worthiness of Joseph was imputed to his brethren, when they were kindly received by Pharaoh, and had the land of Goshen—the best part of Egypt—assigned to them on Joseph's account. It was enough for Pharaoh that they were Joseph's friends; and, if I may be indulged with the comparison, it is enough for the Father of mercies and the Sovereign Judge of the universe, that believers are the friends of Jesus. He views them as intimately related to his Son—he the elder, and they the younger born. Members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, they are restored to favor, and made heirs of an eternal inheritance, through the worthiness of him to whom they are related, and who not only stands high in the court of heaven, but has a covenant right to plead for those who truly repent and believe on his name. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, therefore, you will perceive in our judgment consists, not in any transfer of righteousness, so that they thereby become truly righteous in the eye of the law, but simply

in treating them as though they were righteous on Christ's account; exempting them from punishment, and bestowing on them eternal life. Herein is his righteousness reckoned or imputed to them, since by means of it they are treated in various important respects as they would have been, had they themselves been righteous. This is imputation, and the whole of it, so far as the question before us is concerned. To suppose an actual transfer of righteousness, so that the person to whom the transfer is made has the same natural right to demand acquittal and acceptance as if his own obedience were spotless, is not only to destroy the essential properties of sin and holiness, by making them mere matters of debt and credit, transferable to the account of different persons at pleasure, but to introduce endless confusion into the whole subject. Suppose, for once, an actual transfer of Christ's righteousness to the believer, what shall hinder his being in all respects as righteous as Christ himself, or as if he had never sinned? Why, then, is he not conscious of this righteousness, and why does he not feel the same self-approbation that he would do, had he been sinlessly perfect through every waking moment of his being? Why is he tormented with indwelling sin, and often chastened for its indulgence? Will you say that he is righteous only in his covenant head, and this in relation to a justifying, not an inherent, righteousness? Be it so. It is certainly something very different from his own personal righteousness, the fruit and effect of his obedience, and connected with very different circumstances and results. Indeed, could such a transfer be supposed, and the righteousness of Christ become truly and properly the believer's righteousness, would not the latter be righteous in the eye of God and his law? And might he not demand an acquittal from condemnation as a matter of justice, not of

mercy? Where, then, the propriety of confessing sin and imploring pardon, unless to forgive the penitent and justify the righteous is one and the same thing?

*Fourth.* We take up our fourth inquiry, which relates to the nature of that faith which is concerned in our justification, and the manner in which it is concerned.

It is admitted on all hands, except by the Universalists, that none are justified but true believers. For though Christ's righteousness is, in itself, abundantly sufficient to cover the sins of the whole world, it being all that was necessary fully to magnify the Divine law, yet it is the will of God that it should avail for the pardon and salvation of none but those who repent and believe. They alone are united to Christ; they only possess a spirit which seems to render their pardon and acceptance consistent with the honor of the Divine government. To suppose that God should extend a pardon to those who persisted in acts of unrepented hostility, would be to suppose him willing to weaken his own authority and encourage the transgression of his law. Nay, if men do not, in some good measure, appreciate the methods of his grace, if they do not humbly and thankfully receive their deliverer in the character and offices in which he is revealed, it seems but a natural and just recompense that they should be excluded the benefits which he brings, and be punished, moreover, for their contempt of God's mercy.

But whatever we may think of the fitness or unfitness of such a course, the fact is unquestionable, "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." There is salvation in none other name given under heaven among men, but the name of Jesus, nor in his name unless we believe on him, while all that do believe shall be justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, be it moral or ceremonial.

But the first question here is, What is that faith, which, by the appointment of God is so necessarily concerned in our justification? It is not, I remark, a mere speculative faith, however firmly rooted or long established. Such is the evidence of the Gospel report, that men may assent to its truth, while their hearts are unreconciled to its doctrines; and while these doctrines exert no decisive influence upon their hearts or lives. Such men believe, but their faith is dead, or inactive. The faith which justifies, is a faith of God's operation, and the fruit of the Spirit; a faith which works by love, and which brings the heart into a willing and cheerful obedience to all the Divine commands. In particular, it may be stated, that this faith receives the record which God has given of his Son, cordially approves of his character and work, and with an eye steadfastly turned towards him as the grand medium of mercy to this lost world, humbly trusts in his righteousness and blood, as the meritorious ground of pardon and acceptance with God. The true believer is one who has been thoroughly convinced of his lost and ruined state as a sinner; who has seen and felt the justice of God in his condemnation, and who in his very heart has been made to subscribe to the excellency of God's law, the purity of the precept and the righteousness of the penalty. He has been made willing that God should reign, and has rejoiced to know that he is unalterably determined to maintain the honor of his government. It has been grateful to him to find that God could preserve the rights of his throne, his love of holiness and hatred of sin, and yet, through the mediation of his Son, forgive the penitent and believing sinner. In this state of mind he has embraced Christ as his almighty Saviour and friend, and committed the keeping of his soul unto him, desiring nothing so much as to live to his glory. Such is a true believer, and such the nature of that faith which is indispensably concerned in



our justification. But how is it concerned? Not as a righteousness, you have already heard, whether in whole or in part, on account of which God is pleased to pardon and accept us. How then? Only as the appointed means of bringing the soul into such a union with Christ, that his righteousness may be imputed to us, or improved in our favor. The Scriptures speak much of the believer's union with Christ. They represent it under various similitudes—as the husband and the wife, the vine and the branches, the head and the members, the foundation and the building; and this union is strong and indissoluble. It is both a union of affection and a union of compact; nay, I may say it is a vital union, the Spirit which was given without measure to the head descending abundantly on the members, and quickening them all with the same life-giving power. Now as faith is the grand instrument of forming this union, on our part, and the influence of the Spirit, which works faith in us, the chief mean on his, there seems a propriety in considering faith as that which in a peculiar manner unites the soul to the Redeemer, and consequently that which gives us an interest in his righteousness; and hence it is that we are said to be justified by faith, and by the faith of Christ; because it is by faith that we are thus united to him, and his righteousness reckoned to our account.

Two things are certain from the Bible: that they who are justified stand in a peculiar relation to Christ, as his children, his disciples, his friends, nay, as the members of his body, his flesh and his bones; and that it is faith, the root and source of all other graces, that brings them into or constitutes this relation. This relation supposed, justification follows, not as an act of justice due to the subject of it, but as an act of rich and unmerited grace; which brings me in a few words to inquire, in the

*Fifth* and last place, wherein it appears that we are justified freely by the grace of God.

By the grace of God, we mean his free and unmerited favor—that which flows from his sovereign goodness, and which he can give or withhold as he pleases, without trespassing upon the rights of those who are concerned. In this sense, the entire scheme and work of our salvation is a matter of grace. God was under no obligation to provide a Saviour for this lost world. He might in justice have passed them by, as he did the rebel angels; and when a Saviour was provided, it was a matter of mere grace that he determined to make this provision in regard to any effectual. He might, so far as justice is concerned, if he had pleased, have left all to reject this salvation which the Gospel proposes—I mean all to whom the Gospel comes—and to sink to a deeper hell for their contempt of his offered mercy. That they are made willing in the day of his power, is a matter of mere grace. All are alike disposed to reject the provisions of the Gospel, and all would reject them if God did not interpose by taking away the heart of stone and giving an heart of flesh. But as in all these steps, so necessary to our justification, there is grace, so it is with justification itself. It is an act in the highest degree gratuitous, God forgiving freely those whom, on the ground of justice, he might eternally punish. Christ, indeed, has died the just for the unjust, and by his death an all-sufficient atonement has been made; but this infers no obligation on the part of God to forgive sin, antecedent to the consideration of his promise in the covenant of redemption. There was no such value or merit in the work of Christ even as to bring the eternal Father into debt, or bind him on the score of justice to dispense pardon to any of the human family. From the absolute infinitude of his nature he can receive nothing from others, not even from his own dear Son, and of course can be brought under

obligation to none except by his own vouchsafement. "For who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again; for of him, and through and to him, are all things." To his Son he promised, as a reward for his labors and sufferings, that he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; and to all true penitents he gives joyful assurance that he will pass by their transgressions and restore them to his everlasting friendship. But this is all a matter of grace—grace in the provision for these favors, and grace in their actual bestowment; and hence justification itself, no less than the gift of a Saviour, is by the Apostle regarded as an act of God's free grace. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." How great this grace is, in the present world we shall never be able fully to comprehend; but enough may be seen of it, when thoughtfully and prayerfully considered, to awaken the deepest gratitude, and to call forth the song of thanksgiving and praise.



## LECTURE XIX.

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### ON THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

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JAMES i. 5, 6, 7.—“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

THIS is one of the many promises made to prayer; and, if properly understood, would teach us both how to pray and what to expect from the performance of this duty. It places distinctly before us not only the indispensable obligation but the peculiar importance of prayer. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” But if God will give wisdom to him that asks—and that because he is liberal and upbraideth not—no reason can be assigned why he should not give other needed blessings to those who duly solicit them. In this passage we are taught, also, the manner in which prayer should be offered, to make it acceptable and availing: “Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord.” It is not every kind of prayer which is *prevalent*, but the prayer of faith only. The doubting or wavering man has no reason to expect anything from the Lord. If he receive it at all, it must

be in a way of mere sovereignty, and not according to promise ; for none of his prayers possess the character to which the promise of acceptance is made.

But to place this whole subject more distinctly before you, I shall direct your attention to the following inquiries :

*First.* What is the great end or design of prayer ?

*Second.* Wherein does the importance of this duty appear ?

*Third.* What are some of the characteristics of an acceptable prayer ?

*Fourth.* What is to be understood by the *prayer of faith*, and how far has God bound himself to hear and answer such prayer ?

*First.* What is the great end or design of prayer ?

1st. It is not, most surely, to inform the Most High of our situation or our wants. He surrounds us—He pervades us—He knows our up-rising and down-sitting, and understandeth our thoughts afar off, and before they are formed within us. All that we have, all that we are, is naked and open to him, and has been so from eternity. It is not, therefore, to *inform Him* that we pray.

2d. Nor is it to excite Him to greater degrees of pity or benevolence, or to render our own case or the case of others more interesting to him than before. He is infinitely kind and benevolent always, and beholds the wants of his creatures with the same invariable compassion from everlasting to everlasting. The immutability of his character and attributes necessarily implies this.

3d. Nor, in the third place, is it the design of prayer to effect any change in the purposes of God. This would be impossible, since he is of one mind, and who can turn him ? What his soul desireth, that he doeth in heaven above and in earth beneath. And why should

he not? His purposes are all infinitely wise and infinitely good, formed in view of the whole system of things, and of every possible event. They could not change but for the worse. But let no one infer from this that prayer is vain. Though it cannot change or persuade God, it may accomplish very important ends in relation to ourselves.

1. It may have, and is designed to have, a beneficial influence in preparing us for the mercies we implore. It gives us a *deeper sense of our dependence on God*—a benefit of no inconsiderable moment to creatures liable, as we are, to forget that dependence. It promotes *humility*, by bringing us to the foot of God's throne, where we can scarcely fail to contrast our littleness and vileness with his infinite greatness, purity and glory. It engages us to put our trust in God for all that we need, as well as to thank him for all that we receive.

2. It is designed, also, as an act of homage to our Creator—of homage due to his infinitely glorious attributes, from creatures capable of perceiving them, and who, at the same time, are the daily recipients of his bounty. Prayer, in this view of it, is God's *right*, as well as our duty; and would it not be strange to say that the more perfect this right, the less are we obliged to regard it? But what else do they say, who refuse to pray, on the ground that God is so great and so good as to make prayer unnecessary?

3. Prayer, moreover, is designed as a mean of obtaining good, and of warding off evil. There is no reason to doubt that God, in the plans of his providence, may have connected important blessings with our prayers, just as in other instances he connects the end with the means. He may have determined that certain blessings shall be received only in answer to prayer, and all in accordance with his unchangeable purposes and designs. Prayer, in such cases, does not move God to alter his

purposes, though it may be said that in view of prayer, prayer of a certain character, and flowing from the lips of certain individuals, and on certain occasions, his purposes from eternity were formed. There is no other and no greater difficulty in this case, than in any other where the means and the end are conjoined, whether in the determination of the Divine counsels or in the order of Providence. And if any man will say, because God is fixed or unchangeable in his purpose, I will not pray—prayer can make no difference in my allotments, either here or hereafter—might he not with equal propriety add, neither will I work, nor eat, nor use any means whatsoever to prolong my days ? for here also the Divine purpose is fixed, and the *result*, for aught he knows, as much connected with his own agency in the one case as in the other.

It is enough for us to be assured that God has established a connection between *asking* and *receiving*—a connection more or less certain, according to circumstances, but of sufficient moment to awaken our hopes, and to become a powerful stimulus to prayer. All the promises made to prayer imply this, as do also the many instances in which God has heard the cries of his people.

*Second.* Our second inquiry is, wherein does the great importance of prayer appear ?

We shall do little more here, than name some of the principal articles which may be regarded as an answer to this inquiry.

1st. We mention, first of all, the *fact* that God is styled, in his Word, a prayer-hearing God. “*O thou that hearest prayer,*” is the language of David, when moved by the Holy Ghost. This is God’s name, and his memorial to all generations ; and it carries with it a powerful argument for addressing his throne. It is virtually proclaiming to us that he is upon a throne of mercy—a throne accessible to us at all times, where we may bring our

sins, our troubles, and our wants, with the joyful assurance that he will not turn away his ear from our prayer. Prayer is not then a useless, but an important duty.

2d. But this truth is more distinctly announced in the repeated commands given us to pray. It is not left us to consider prayer as a mere privilege, which we may *neglect* or *use* at our pleasure. God has enjoined it in a great variety of forms, and thereby intimated that it is a duty well-pleasing to him, and of deep importance to ourselves. We are commanded to pray *always*, to pray without fainting, to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. We are commanded to pray in our closets, in our domestic circles, in our public assemblies, everywhere lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting, and for all men. Prayer must then be a duty of imperative obligation, and of the highest moment to ourselves and to others.

3d. The same conclusion follows most obviously from the promises which God has made to prayer. Many of these are upon record, and though somewhat diversified as to character, they all go to establish an important connection between asking and receiving the blessings we desire. "The Lord will hear when I call upon him; he will fulfill the desire of them that hear him; he will also hear their cry. He hath not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear. Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." This is the current language of the Bible. How strict the connection is between asking and receiving, or under what circumstances God has pledged himself to hear and answer the prayers of his people, it is not my intention in this place to inquire. It is sufficient to have it understood that a connection exists,



of more or less strictness ; for this fully establishes the importance of prayer.

4th. We shall be still more impressed with this truth if we consider a moment what prayer has actually done.

The prayers of Abraham were effectual in removing Divine judgments, and in procuring important blessings for himself and for his children ; and if there had been ten righteous men in Sodom, his prayers would have saved that guilty city.

The prayers of Moses suspended the plagues of Egypt and saved Israel at the borders of the Red Sea ; and often did his prayers avert Divine judgments from this guilty people, while in the wilderness and on their journey to the promised land. Behold him interceding for them when they made and worshiped the molten calf, and when they rebelled at the return of the spies. Never was the prayer of mortal more disinterested or more ardent ; and never, perhaps, did God answer in a manner more gracious and condescending. "I have heard thee," says God, "and pardoned the people according to thy word," (Ex. 32 : Num. 19.) I might refer you to the prayers of Joshua, of Gideon, of Barak, Samson, David and others, which were graciously accepted and answered. Often has God heard his people in the very thing which they asked. "Elijah prayed, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months ; he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain." The prayers of Elisha proved a surer defence to Israel, than thousands of chariots and horsemen. And what shall we say of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*—all of whom had power with God, and prevailed ? Their cries entered into the ears of the God of Sabaoth, and were honored with signal interpositions of the Divine mercy. *Prayer* saved the Jews from the murderous sword of Haman, in the days of Esther and Mordecai ; *prayer* rescued Peter from prison, when his life was in danger from the blood-

thirsty Herod ; and prayer released Paul and Silas from their chains, and from a dungeon at Philippi ; and was it not in answer to prayer, that the Holy Ghost descended on multitudes on the day of Pentecost, and so many thousands were turned to the Lord ? The *efficacy* of prayer demonstrates the importance of prayer. But another circumstance which shows the high importance of this duty is,

5th. God often suspends his favors upon the condition of our asking for them, and asking in a suitable manner. Thus God says to Ezekiel : “ For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” He had spoken of bringing them back from the Babylonish captivity, and resettling them in their native land ; of giving them a new heart and a new spirit ; but this he would not do, but in answer to prayer ; and, therefore, in another place he declares : “ *Then shall ye find me, when ye shall seek for me with all your heart, and with all your soul ;*” implying that they would not find him until they sought him in this manner. Much the same thing is taught in God’s answer to Solomon at the dedication of the temple, and which may be regarded as a general rule, at least, of his dealings towards that nation. “ If I shut up heaven, that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people ; if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land ;” which implies that if they would not thus humble themselves under Divine judgments, and pray, and make supplication, they had no reason to expect that their calamities would be removed. But the Apostle appears forever to settle this subject, when he says in direct terms : “ Ye have not, because ye ask not ; ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss ;” im-

plying that the blessing is often withheld for want of prayer, and for want of prayer of the right kind. We would not assert that this is always the case, or, which is the same thing, that God never dispenses his favor to individuals, but through the instrumentality of prayer. He is a Sovereign, and may do what he has promised to do—he may turn aside from the ordinary course of his providence, and magnify the riches of his mercy contrary to our expectations and hopes. We must not limit *him*, where he has not limited *himself*. Still, if it be a fact, that he often suspends the blessing upon our asking for it, and our asking for it aright, what an argument is this for sincere, humble, and importunate prayer!

6th. I mention but one consideration more to illustrate the necessity and importance of this duty, and that is the example of Christ. Christ not only prayed often with his disciples, but he prayed alone, offering up strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save. With him there was no negligence nor weariness in this duty. He rose up sometimes early in the morning, before the day dawned, that he might give himself to prayer; while on other occasions he spent the whole night in this duty. But what did he pray for? He had no sins to pardon, no heart to cleanse. No! but he had Satan and a malignant world to withstand, many labors to perform, and much suffering to endure; and it was one of the circumstances of his humiliation, that he who was naturally and originally possessed of all power should be in a condition to ask and receive aid from on high. But we are not to suppose his prayers terminated chiefly on himself. His benevolent heart must have often looked abroad, and sent up many a fervent cry for enemies as well as friends. He who was disposed to say on his cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," cannot be suspected of having overlooked

them on other occasions, especially when it is recollected how much he constantly labored for their good. So great an example as this cannot fail to impress us with the fact that prayer is a duty reasonable in itself, and of the deepest moment both to ourselves and to others.

*Third.* Shall we inquire, in the third place, what are some of the characteristics of an acceptable prayer? If the duty be important, we ought to know when it is so discharged as to secure the approbation of Him to whom it is directed.

1st. I name as one circumstance of acceptable prayer, that it must be the prayer of a *righteous* man—in other words, of a true Christian. It does not seem possible that God should accept the prayer of the wicked, as it cannot flow from a right spirit. Besides, we are expressly told that “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, while the prayer of the upright is his delight.” We will not say that God never *hears* the wicked, as he hears the young ravens when they cry. As a compassionate Being, he may so far regard their supplications as to deliver them out of their troubles. This is what the Psalmist intimates, when he celebrates the goodness of God towards “those who go down into the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters. They see the wonders of the Lord in the deep. For he commandeth the stormy wind and lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven; they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. Then they cry unto the Lord, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.”

This is a wonderful expression of God’s mercy, but no proof that he accepts the prayers of those whom he thus delivers from a watery grave. God is *holy*, and it would be inconsistent with this attribute to approve or accept of an act in his creatures which had in it no degree of

moral worth. He may have compassion on a sinner, and deliver him from trouble when he cries; but he cannot behold his character or his works with approbation. This has always been a stumbling-stone to many, and not unfrequently furnished the ungodly with an excuse to withhold prayer altogether. The truth, however, must not be concealed, whatever abuses may be made of it. God hath said, "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall become sin." And David confesses, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." And will he hear others who regard iniquity in their hearts, and whose prevalent disposition is opposition to God and his law? The prayers of such persons, as well as all their other acts, are destitute of love to God and love to man, and cannot be accepted in the sight of Him who looks to the very springs of action, and who condemns whatever is not accordant with his law. It appears, therefore, to be a primary requisite of every acceptable prayer, that it should flow from the heart or lips of a righteous man.

2d. But secondly, it must be *sincere*, expressing an unequivocal desire for the object prayed for. It must in truth be the language of the heart—not of the understanding or conscience simply. Too many of the prayers, even of God's people, we have reason to believe, are deplorably wanting in sincerity. They ask, because they know they must ask, and not because they truly *desire*. But this is only to play the hypocrite before God, and cannot, most certainly, secure his approbation. He requires *truth* in the inward parts. But we remark,

3d. That prayer, to be acceptable and prevalent with God, must be *earnest* as well as *sincere*. No man can doubt that this is an important characteristic of the duty, when rightly performed. We find it entering very deeply into many of the prayers recorded in holy writ, and powerfully recommended by Christ himself. How fer-

vent were the prayers of Abraham, when he pleaded in behalf of Sodom, and when he made supplication for Ishmael! How did Jacob wrestle with the angel, when he interceded for the life of the mother and the children! He saw them exposed, as he apprehended, to the destroying sword of Esau, who was coming out to meet him with four hundred armed men, and he said to the angel, the great angel of the covenant, "*I will not let thee go except thou bless me.*" Read the prayers of Moses, of David, Daniel, Nehemiah and Ezra: with what ardor do they pour out their supplications before God! With feelings excited and elevated, they take hold of his strength, and plead with an earnestness which shows the fullness of their expectation and desire. And Christ, in the parable of the importunate widow, and of the man who went to borrow three loaves of his friend at midnight, has very distinctly inculcated the necessity, not of sincerity only, but of *earnestness* in our supplications. Nay, he has expressly assured us that such earnestness is both acceptable and available with God. It is the *effectual, fervent* prayer of a righteous man, St. James tells us, that availeth much; implying that little is to be hoped at any time from our prayers, unless they rise to a holy importunity.

4th. Let me remark, however, in the fourth place, that though importunate, they should not be dictatorial or presumptuous. On the contrary, they should ever be marked by the deepest humility. This is an important requisite of every acceptable prayer. It is to the great God that we pray, the dread Majesty of the universe, before whom all nations are as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance: it is to him in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and before whom cherubim and seraphim veil their faces. What are we, that we should speak to this great and glorious Being! One would think that we should shrink into the very

dust at the thought. Surely it becomes us to approach him with the profoundest reverence and humility, laying ourselves at his feet under a deep conviction of the awful distance between him and us. This was the temper of Abraham when he drew near to God in the plains of Mamre. We hardly know which to admire most, the humility of his address, or the persevering ardor with which it was urged: "Behold, now, I have taken it upon me to speak unto the Lord:" as if it was a great thing—a privilege, of which he felt himself wholly unworthy. And again: "O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once." Such also was the temper of the publican, who stood "afar off" from the mercy-seat, and "who dare not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, and cried, God be merciful to me a sinner." And this is the temper, in a greater or less degree, of all acceptable worshipers. Their cry is the cry of the humble; and of them God hath said that he will not despise their prayer. His promise is, that he will be nigh unto all such as are of a broken heart, and that he will save such as be of a contrite spirit. Without some portion of this spirit transfused into our prayers, it is impossible they should find acceptance with God: while they who have most of it will stand highest in the Divine favor, and secure the richest answer to their prayers. The Lord loves to fill the empty vessel—to raise the poor up out of the dust—to feed the hungry, starving soul, while the rich he sends empty away.

5th. I add, as a further characteristic of acceptable prayer, that it must proceed from right motives. Nothing is more common than to ask for lawful objects from improper motives. "Ye ask and receive not," says the Apostle, "because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." The object might have been right, but the motive was wrong. Something earthly or selfish gave birth to their prayers. Perhaps they desired

the gift of miracles, that they might benefit their friends, or raise their own credit in the world. Perhaps they desired to be saved from the violence of persecution, not that they might serve God with less distraction or extend farther the borders of the Redeemer's kingdom, but that they might be more at ease in their callings, and sink more quietly into the enjoyments of the present life. Perhaps they were divided into parties, and wished some advantage over their respective opponents. But whatever was the object, the motive was wrong. God's glory was not their end—nor their own best good—nor that of others. Whether it were temporal or spiritual blessings which they sought, some earth-born motive lurked beneath, and therefore their prayers were unavailing; as ours also will be, when the motive is such as the all-searching eye of God cannot approve. Then only will our prayers enter into his ears, when they flow from a heart deeply imbued with the spirit of the Gospel; when his glory is uppermost with us, and the highest good of his kingdom. In such a state of mind, we shall ask for right things in a right manner; and God, the unerring judge of our hearts, will accept the service and pronounce his blessing.

6th. Finally, I might say, with the Apostle in our text, that we should ask *in faith*, nothing wavering; for faith, no doubt, is an essential ingredient in every acceptable prayer.

But as I propose to make this a matter of somewhat extended discussion, I shall defer it till I take up the fourth general inquiry, viz.: "What is to be understood by *the prayer of faith*, and how far has God bound himself to hear and answer such prayer?" In the mean time, we shall conclude this lecture by remarking that much of the Christian character is developed in the article of prayer. "He that prays much," said the good Fenelon, "loves much, and he that prays little loves



little." A prayerless Christian is a contradiction in terms; while he that prays not from a right spirit, how much soever he may abound in the duty, falls short of the Christian character. I know of no criterion more decisive of the *reality* and the *measure* of a man's piety, than his prayers. Just so much as he has of the spirit of true devotion, just so much and no more has he of the love of God and the love of man in his heart, and just so much of reverence for God, of faith in God, and every other Christian grace. Tell me how much he prays, with what sincerity, with what ardor, with what watchfulness, confidence and perseverance, and for what objects, and I can tell you how much he loves and fears God; how much he loves his neighbor; what is his humility, his spirituality, and his deadness to the world; what his self-denial, his patience, meekness and fidelity in the cause of his Master. All these virtues are but the modifications of holy love; and the strength of this is measured by the spirit of his devotions.

Judging then by this rule, how much religion have we? What is the character of our prayers? Let every one who is in the habit of praying, and praying in secret, answer this question for himself. If he can find what moves him in this duty, and especially what is the preponderating motive, he will find the master-spring of his soul, that which settles his character in God's sight; and which, remaining as it is, will settle it in the day of final retribution. He may know both whether his piety be *real*, and whether it be in a declining or progressive state. I commend this subject, my young brethren, most earnestly to your attention. Soon you will be called to leave this sacred retreat, and to enter upon the work of the Gospel ministry—a work full of labor, full of difficulty, full of self-denial. Much will you need *diligence*, and *fortitude*, and *patience*, and resignation to the Divine will; but above all will you need the spirit of grace and supplication.

If you would be saved from worldliness, from pride, from sloth, and from whatever would dishonor Christ, or hinder the success of your labors, and if you would be eminently holy, or eminently useful, *cultivate a spirit of prayer*. Let this be an object with you *now* in all your preparations for the ministry ; and when you shall enter upon this sacred office, do not forget, I entreat you, that *prayer—fervent and believing prayer—is among the mightiest weapons of your spiritual warfare.*



## LECTURE XX.

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### ON THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

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JAMES i. 5, 6, 7.—“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

IN remarking upon these words in a former Lecture, we proposed the following inquiries :

*First.* What is the great end or design of prayer ?

*Second.* Wherein does the importance of this duty appear ?

*Third.* What are some of the characteristics of acceptable prayer ? and

*Fourth.* What is to be understood by the *prayer of faith*, and how far has God bound himself to hear such prayer ?

The first three inquiries have already been considered. We proceed now to the fourth, and ask

What is to be understood by *the prayer of faith* ?

This expression seems obviously capable of two senses, and must be understood differently, according to the different kinds of *faith* employed in prayer. In the primitive Church there is reason to believe that two kinds of faith were employed : one *extraordinary*, being peculiar to certain individuals, who had the gift of work-

ing miracles ; the other *common*, belonging to all Christians who truly embraced the Gospel. Both were the result of Divine teaching, though perhaps in a different way ; and both were founded upon the testimony of God : still they were in various respects different from each other. The *first*, which we denominate *extraordinary*, and which was connected with miraculous operations, was not necessarily, it would seem, a gracious exercise. Certain it is, that many wrought miracles, and miracles in Christ's name, who will be disowned by him at last. Whether they wrought them *with* or *without* faith, is not expressly said ; but as they wrought them in Christ's name, there is a fair presumption that it was through faith in that name. And this presumption is the stronger when we consider the language which the Apostle holds on the subject of miraculous gifts in general (1 Cor. xiii.) "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ; and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though *I have all faith*, so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Here it is supposed not only that men might work miracles without being Christians, but that they might *work* them in the exercise of faith in the Divine power and veracity : nay, that they might possess *all faith*, so as to remove mountains, or the highest degree of faith connected with miracles, and yet be destitute of *charity* or love. Not so the faith common to all true believers. This, in all cases, is a gracious or holy exercise. Love is essential to its very being. It not only gives credence to the Divine testimony, in whatever manner exhibited, but cordially approves of that testimony. It is not merely an intellectual but a moral exercise ; and hence it is described as purifying the heart and overcoming the world. The faith of miracles might exist without a renovated heart ; but

this never exists except in those who are born of God and love God, and therefore it is placed among the fruits of the Spirit, and regarded as the grand condition of salvation. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing," saith the Apostle, "but *faith which worketh by love.*"

It is not to our present purpose minutely to distinguish between these two kinds of faith, nor to inquire how often it is probable they were blended together in the same persons. It will be enough to have it distinctly understood that they were, in some important particulars, diverse from each other; and therefore that we cannot reason from one to the other as if they were radically and essentially the same.

What has been denominated the *faith of miracles*, because *peculiar* to those who wrought miracles, and *necessary* to such extraordinary displays of the Divine power, seems to have been not only a firm persuasion of the Divine power, by which all things possible are alike easy to God, but that the contemplated miracle, in any given case, *would certainly be performed.* This, it will be perceived, was more than simply believing that it was the pleasure of God that miracles should be wrought, in greater or less numbers, in the name of his Son, and on fit occasions, and in answer to prayer, and for important purposes, and by the hands of those to whom the gift of working miracles was imparted: for all these things might be believed, and firmly believed, without reaching the point that a particular miracle, in a particular case, would be wrought. Now what we believe and maintain is, that the faith of miracles, whatever else it included, always involved a belief that the very miracle contemplated, in any given case, would be accomplished. It did not stop with the fact that God was able to accomplish it, or that he had promised to accomplish it on any supposed conditions, or that he was a God of truth, and

would not fail to redeem his pledge, but it went to the precise and definite fact that the miracle contemplated would be performed. How this point was reached will be an after consideration; but that the faith in question did most certainly reach it, we think is evident from the manner in which Christ describes this faith in the eleventh of Mark. When his disciples expressed their surprise at seeing the fig-tree withered away, which he had cursed for its barrenness the day before, he says to them, "Have faith in God: for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith, *shall come to pass*, he shall have whatsoever he saith." Words could scarcely be framed which should mark with more precision the fact that faith, in this case, was to *believe* that the miraculous events in question would certainly take place. Such a faith he describes both negatively and positively. "Whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and *shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe*." Believe what? Why, that those things which he saith, *shall come to pass*—in other words, that the predicted miracle should be performed, by the mountain's being removed and cast into the sea. Doubtless such a faith implied an unshaken belief in God's power, by which the miracle was to be accomplished; but is it not certain that it implied more? a *belief* that it was God's *will* or *pleasure* that the miracle predicted should take place? Keeping in view this kind of faith, and the miraculous events with which it stood connected, our Lord adds, in the very next verse: "Therefore I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, and *ye shall have them*." "*Believe that ye receive them*" is a description equally *precise* and *definite* with that which he had given in the preceding verse, and obviously implies a *belief* that

the things desired and asked in prayer would certainly be received. Nor can it be well questioned that the "*all things whatsoever*" had an immediate and exclusive reference to the subject in hand, or to miraculous operations.

That a persuasion of the certainty of the event, or the miracle to be performed, was *essential* to this peculiar and extraordinary kind of faith, is manifest not only from these words of Christ, but from the *fact* that those who wrought miracles often intimated such a persuasion before the miracle was performed. They commonly, if not universally, prefaced these operations by some declaration of what they intended and expected to do, and thereby virtually predicted what was immediately to follow. Thus Peter, when he healed the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple, said to him: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee," (implying that he was going to do something,) "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, *rise up and walk.*" And when he cured Eneas, who for eight years had lain sick of the palsy, he said to him: "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," or is about so to do, "*arise and make thy bed* ; and he arose immediately." It is perfectly obvious in both cases, that the Apostle had the *intention* and *expectation* of working a miracle antecedent to its being wrought; and if the miracle had not followed, all must admit that the Apostle would have been disappointed; or, which is the same thing, that the event did not fall out according to his expectation and belief.

Another fact, which shows that a persuasion of the certainty of the miracle was essential to the faith by which it was wrought, is, that those gifted with the power of working miracles did not always attempt to display that power; or, if they did, they failed through unbelief. *Paul*, it is said, left Trophimus at *Miletum* sick; which cannot be accounted for but upon one of two suppositions, either that he did not attempt to heal

him, or attempted and failed. Whichever be true, it is certain he had no well-grounded persuasion that the thing would be done, otherwise it would have been done, God having bound himself to accomplish whatever his people, upon good and sufficient grounds, firmly believe. We say good and sufficient grounds, for neither the faith of miracles, nor any other kind of faith, ought to be considered as an unfounded conjecture—a mere persuasion, without cause or reason. On the contrary, this faith, whenever it existed, was a *firm* and *rational* persuasion that the Divine power would interpose for a particular purpose. But if *rational*, it must be built on evidence; on evidence not only that the power of working miracles was imparted to men, to be employed on certain fit occasions, and for high and glorious purposes, but that it was the pleasure and purpose of God that a miracle of a particular kind should be wrought at the time and in the circumstances contemplated. This was an important fact to be believed, for nothing short of this would secure a *belief in the certainty of the event*, an essential characteristic of the faith of miracles. But it may be asked, how could it be known that it was the pleasure and purpose of God that a miracle should be wrought in any given case? Whether this question can be answered or not, let it be remembered that this fact of the Divine purpose must have been known, or no sure ground for the certainty of the event could have existed. Our reply, however, is, that the purpose of God in the case might have been known by the immediate suggestions of the Holy Spirit. Nor is there any inherent improbability in the supposition that those who wrought miracles by the power of the Holy Ghost, should receive intimations from him when and where these mighty works were to be performed. Did he preside over their thoughts and over their words whenever they opened their lips on the subject of their heavenly message, and



can it be thought unreasonable or incredible that he should point out to them the fit occasions for those works by which their message was to be confirmed? Without some supernatural intimation of this kind, it does not seem possible that any firm persuasion of the miraculous event could exist. For, can men believe without evidence? or could evidence be derived from any other quarter, as to the future occurrence of a miracle? But allow the intimation we have supposed, from that ever-present Spirit who was given to the primitive disciples in his miraculous teaching and guidance, and all difficulty vanishes. What would otherwise appear a weakness or absurdity, becomes a plain and obvious duty. And thus the *faith* of miracles will have something to rest upon, as it is nothing else but giving credit to the Divine testimony. It involves the belief that a miracle will be performed in a given case, how strange soever the miracle may be, agreeably to the suggestions of that Divine Spirit by whose agency it is to be accomplished.

Now, with regard to prayers which were offered in the exercise of this faith, we say, once for all, that there can be no doubt that the very thing which was asked was always granted, because this is agreeable to the import of the promise made in the case; and because the very nature of the faith thus exercised, presupposed the known purpose of God in regard to the event. It was thus that "Elijah prayed, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months: he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain." But can it be supposed, that he made this prayer without a special intimation from the Divine Spirit that such a petition would be accordant with the will of God? In a manner similar to this, we understand that passage where it is said, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick:" God having promised that miraculous effects should follow a prayer offered up in the exercise of extraordinary or miraculous faith.

But there is another kind of faith employed in prayer, common to Christians of all ages—a faith which takes hold of the Divine attributes and the Divine promises, without any miraculous intimation concerning the result—a faith which rests distinctly and primarily upon *God's Word*, making *that* the rule and limit of its expectations. Whatever is declared in the Sacred Volume, it stands ready to receive, and to employ as an argument in prayer. Beyond this it never goes. At the same time, it may be remarked that this faith is the fruit and effect of Divine teaching. It is wrought in the soul by that Almighty Agent who enlightens the understanding and sanctifies the heart; and it comprehends in it such a vivid belief of what *God is*, and of what he is ready to do for those who truly seek him, as no unrenewed man ever possessed. Nor is this all; it implies a cordial approbation of the Divine character and will. For, as we have already heard, it is faith which works by love.

How this faith is put forth in the duty of prayer may require some elucidation. I cannot better express my own views, than by saying that faith in this case is directed chiefly to two things—the attributes of God, and the promises which God has made in and through his dear Son.

1st. Faith in the first place is directed to the attributes of God, and has much to do with these in the article of prayer. This is clearly implied in the declaration of the Apostle, “He that cometh to God must believe that *He is*, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” as if there could be no acceptable worship without such belief. But to believe that *God is*, is not simply to believe that *God exists*; it supposes and implies that we believe him such a being as he has proclaimed himself to be—in other words, that we distinctly recognize his glorious attributes as a foundation and encouragement to prayer. And hence it is that, in

most of the prayers recorded in the Bible, faith is seen to fix upon one or more of the Divine attributes.

But to enter a little more into detail—let me say that faith *often*, if not *always*, takes hold of the Divine power. It comes to God as the Almighty Father of the universe, who with infinite ease controls every event throughout his vast kingdom. Perceiving the whole energy of nature to be in his hands, and that creatures are but the instruments of his power, it acquires assurance that his purposes will stand and that he will execute all his pleasure. Let the day, then, be ever so dark, or the work to be accomplished ever so difficult, faith finds a refuge in the *power* of God, connected, as it always is, with his unsearchable wisdom and goodness. In truth, *faith* has much more to do with the Divine power than we should readily imagine; and it is more frequently described in the sacred writings by its exercises in relation to this attribute than any other.

Thus it is said of Abraham, after he had received the promise of a son, that “he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was fully persuaded that what God promised he was *able* also to perform.” Thus, also, in that greater trial of his faith, when he was called to offer up his only begotten son, he appears to have kept his eye steadfastly fixed on the power of God, “accounting that God was *able* to raise him up, even from the dead.”

The same thing is conspicuous in the *faith* of the blind men who followed Jesus in the way, and cried, saying, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on us,” (Matt. ix.) When Jesus had come into the house and called them to him, he said, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” He does not say, Believe ye that I *will*? This was a point in his own breast, which they were unable to solve; but, Believe ye that I am *able*? To which they replied, “Yea, Lord.” “And he touched their eyes, and said,

According to your faith be it unto you ; and their eyes were opened." They no doubt hoped in the mercy of Jesus, but their faith was primarily built upon his power ; and this, for aught that appears, was all that was necessary to secure the blessing.

Similar to this was the case of the leper mentioned by the same Evangelist, (Matt. viii.,) and also of the centurion who besought Christ to heal his servant. The leper came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, if thou *wilt*, thou canst make me clean." He had no doubt, it seems, of Christ's power ; here his faith was full and unwavering. But he had no *certain*, perhaps no preponderating belief of Christ's *will* or *intention* in the case. "*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst,*" was his prayer, fully recognizing the power of Christ to grant his request, and referring the event to his sovereign pleasure.

As to the centurion, his faith was of so remarkable a character as to lead the Saviour to exclaim, "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And yet his faith chiefly terminated on the power of Christ. For when Jesus proposed to go and heal his servant, the centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof ; but *speak the word only*, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus said, "Go thy way, and *as* (or since) thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour."

We cannot pursue this thought ; but there are many things in the Scriptures which show that faith looks much to God's power, and that its strength is often measured by the regard which it has to this attribute.

But as it is with the *power*, so it is with the other attributes of God ; faith directs its eye to them all, as they are severally and harmoniously displayed in the works and Word of God. If God speak, let it be *where* and *what* it will, faith stands ready to hear, and to give an un-

qualified assent. Is it asserted, in the Bible, that God is *wise, infinitely wise*? Faith fully accredits the assertion, and would do so, even if the characters of wisdom were less visibly inscribed on the works of God. This is a joyful truth, on which it safely reposes at all times, and especially in seasons of darkness and calamity, when the aspects of Providence are mysterious or foreboding.

It is said that *God is gracious and merciful*, ready to forgive the penitent and believing? Faith responds to it with confidence and joy, and flies to the bosom of eternal mercy as its only refuge; yes, and to this same bosom it delights to carry the sins and sorrows of others, while with humble, but importunate desires, it pleads that they too may receive from this rich and overflowing fountain. It is easy to see, also, that faith looks strongly to the *purity and justice* of God, and no less to his *unchanging truth and faithfulness*. His truth, indeed, is that glorious attribute to which it necessarily cleaves, and on which it stands, as on a basis firm and immovable. In nothing, perhaps, is faith displayed more, than in taking God at his word, and in exercising an implicit confidence in his promises. But this brings us to inquire more particularly,

2d. How faith regards the promises of God, all of which are made in and through his dear Son. Shall I say it regards them as they are, or according to their true intent and design? In other words, that it makes them speak a language which the Holy Spirit intended they should speak, without narrowing them on the one hand, or giving them an improper latitude on the other? These promises are different in their character, and faith knows how to distinguish them. Some are *absolute*, depending on no condition to be performed, or none which is uncertain. Some are *conditional*, because the blessing promised is suspended on something which *may* or *may not* take place. Other promises are *local*, confined to

certain individuals or times, and are of no further importance to believers in general, than as they furnish examples of the Divine benignity and faithfulness. Others again are *universal*, because they apply to believers of all times and places. Such is the promise of the pardon of sin, and of the gift of eternal life; and the promise that God will never leave nor forsake his people. Other promises may be called *definite*, because they hold true of every individual, and of every case which comes within the purview of the promise. Such is the promise made to the *faith* of miracles. By the very tenor of the promise, the Divine veracity stands pledged to the very thing asked or believed, in every case where such faith exists. And such too, in effect, is the promise of eternal life to him that *believes*. But there are promises of a different character, and which cannot, with any reason, be interpreted with such undeviating strictness. Such are the promises made to believers, in relation to their temporal support, and as to the *measure* of success which shall attend their worldly enterprises. These we call *indefinite*, because they are of that general and undefined character which leaves the special application of them to the sovereign pleasure of God. When Christ said to his disciples, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," meaning food and raiment, and whatever was necessary to their earthly subsistence, they would greatly have mistaken the import of this promise, if they had interpreted it so strictly as to infer that his truth was pledged in all cases to keep them from suffering and want. "Godliness," we know, "hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" but who would think of inferring from this, that none that are *godly* shall suffer *hunger* and *thirst*, *cold* and *nakedness*, or even the want of all things? Look at the condition of the Apostles, who were occasionally subjected to

every privation and suffering, and to those ancient worthies, specially commended for their faith, "who were destitute, afflicted, tormented; who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth"—God's Word and providence must be the interpreters of each other. Keeping our eye upon this circumstance, we find no difficulty in understanding his promises which pertain to the temporal subsistence and comfort of his children. We all agree to consider them as *indefinite*, holding true in a sufficient number of cases to justify Him who made them, and greatly to encourage those to whom they appertain; but not of such strict and undeviating application as to allow of no exception. We believe, indeed, that according to his promise, God will give every temporal good which he perceives to be the best on the whole, and that nothing will be withheld which, in all the circumstances of the case, would not be an evil rather than a blessing. Why may it not be so, with respect to things commonly sought in prayer? And why may not the promises which are made to this duty, be interpreted with the same generality? We can see no reason why this should not be done, except in those cases where the will or purpose of God as to the event is already known. In every such instance, we cheerfully concede that the promise is to be interpreted *strictly*. Thus it is with the promise made to the faith of miracles, as we have already intimated, and with the promise of pardon and eternal life to the penitent; and thus it is with all those promises which relate to the ultimate spread of the Gospel and the universal reign of Christ. In all these cases the will of God is known, and we cannot doubt that these promises will be literally and strictly fulfilled. But where the will of God is not known, it would seem reasonable, and even necessary, to regard the promise as *indefinite*, holding out encour-

agement to hope and to prayer, but laying no foundation for certainty as to the particular result. It is in this manner, we suppose, that all those *general* and *comprehensive promises*, made to the believing suppliant, in the Scriptures, are to be interpreted. Nor will it make any difference whether these promises relate to things temporal or things spiritual. They seem designed to comprehend whatever may be regarded as a proper subject of prayer. That there are promises of this description, which alike concern every true believer, and which he has a right to plead as often as he comes to the throne of grace for any legitimate object, will not probably be doubted. When Christ says, in his sermon on the mount, (Matt. vii. 7, 8,) "*Ask*, and it shall be given you ; *seek*, and ye shall find ; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that *asketh*, *receiveth* ; and he that *seeketh*, *findeth* ; and to him that *knocketh*, it shall be opened," it can hardly be made a question that this language authorizes every man, and especially every true Christian, to ask what he will for himself or for others, pertaining to this life or the next, and to ask with the hope that he shall receive, provided the object be lawful, and that he ask for it in a right manner. And to give the greater encouragement to prayer, Christ adds, "What man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?" Here, then, is a promise that if we *ask*, we shall *receive* ; if we *seek*, we shall *find* ; if we *knock*, it shall be *opened unto us* ; and it restricts us to no particular kind of blessings ; but its language is broad enough to cover all our wants and all our desires, which, at any time, we may have occasion to present to the throne of Divine mercy



A serious question now arises : how are we to interpret this promise, and other kindred promises, alike comprehensive in their character ? I know of but two general opinions which are entertained upon this subject. One is that which I have already suggested, that promises of this kind are to be regarded as *indefinite*, so far, at least, as they stand related to things where the will or purpose of God is not known ; holding true in a sufficient number of cases to encourage hope and excite to prayer—but in no degree pledging the Divine veracity that whatsoever we ask with the faith common to true believers, or if you please, in a right and acceptable manner, we shall certainly receive. The other opinion is, that God has bound himself in these promises to give to his children *whatsoever things* they ask *believing*, making no exceptions—but construing the promises as being strictly and universally true, applying to every case where the blessing is sought in the manner required. Thus, if a man were to ask for his daily bread, and to ask it with that faith which he is bound to exercise, the truth of God stands pledged in the promise to grant it ; or if he ask for any other favor, temporal or spiritual, for himself or for others, he may ask with an unwavering assurance that he shall receive, and receive the very thing he asks. Which of these opinions is true ? To aid in determining this question, let me solicit your attention to the following remarks :

1st. It is more desirable in itself, and a far greater privilege to the believer, to have the promise understood with the limitation we have suggested, than to suppose that God is pledged to give the very thing which is asked, be it *wise* or *unwise*, for his own glory, or the contrary. Suppose a parent has two sons, and he should say to one, “I will give you *whatsoever* you ask, provided you ask with a dutiful and confiding spirit”—making no exceptions expressed or implied. And to the other, “I

will give you *whatsoever* you ask, asking with a right temper—except in those cases where, from my superior wisdom, I perceive it would be better to withhold ;” which is the most privileged son ? Doubtless we should reply, *he* whose answer to his request is made to turn upon his *father’s* wisdom, not *his own*. I hold this case to be precisely parallel with the one under consideration. Interpret the Divine promise *strictly*, and the believer is sure to have all that he asks ; but is it certain that he will have that which, on the whole, is most for God’s glory, and his own best good ? Take the promise with its proposed limitation, and all the attributes of God stand pledged that his petitions shall result in his highest welfare ; he shall receive all that is good for him, and nothing shall be withheld but what eternal wisdom perceives would, in all its connections, prove injurious. Does not this state of the case furnish a strong presumption that the promise ought to be interpreted with such limitations as we have suggested ?

2d. Besides : who that is in any measure sensible of his own weakness and fallibility, but must be compelled to acknowledge that, in a thousand cases, when he prays, he knows not *what*, all things considered, would be for the best. His desires may be ardent, and directed to an object lawful in itself, and apparently of great moment, when yet he cannot tell whether, in the whole view of the case, it would be better for God to *give* or *withhold*. Why, then, should he not refer the matter to one who can tell ? Is not this an act of submission which he owes to the all-wise and almighty Governor of the world ? Why should he attempt to take a step beyond his proper sphere, and by an *unconditional* and *unqualified* request, affect to give direction to events, the accomplishment of which he knows not, and cannot know without a special revelation, would be for his own good, or the good of God’s kingdom ? If there be any point certain, it would

seem that, where our ignorance stands confessed, we ought to refer our petitions to the sovereign pleasure of God.

3d. But farther: it has commonly been supposed that our prayers, for many things at least, should be offered with submission. But it is difficult to conceive of any case where this ought to be done, if we interpret the general promises made to prayer without any restriction. We do not ask God to raise the dead and judge the world at the last day *if it may please him*, because his pleasure in regard to those events is already known. Nor could it, as we conceive, with any propriety of language be said that in our prayers we *submit* these events to his sovereign pleasure; because, knowing what that pleasure is, there is no such alternative in the case as is always supposed when we refer an event to his sovereign disposal.

But if all the promises made to prayer are to be understood without any limitation or restriction, pledging God in every case to give the very thing which is asked, how could it ever be our duty to ask with *submission*? Our requests, it would seem, ought to be as unqualified and as absolute as the promise; and the only point to be aimed at would be firmly to believe that our requests would be granted.

4th. Again: it is not unimportant to remark that the Apostle John appears to have interpreted the promises made to prayer with the same limitations which we have done; in all cases, I mean, where the will or purpose of God is not known. (1 John, v. 14, 15.) "This," says he, "is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything *according to his will* he heareth us." That is, as I understand the passage, he lends a gracious ear, and grants our requests: "*if we ask anything according to his will.*" But when can this be said of us? If the *will* of God here be understood to mean his *sovereign*

*pleasure* as well as his *preceptive* will—*what* he wisely purposes as to the event, no less than what he commands as a matter of duty, (and we can see no reason why an interpretation thus comprehensive should not be given,) then it is obvious that we do not ask *according to his will*, in the full meaning of the Apostle, unless three things can be affirmed of our petitions: first, that they are *authorized*, embracing proper subjects of prayer; secondly, that they are offered in the spirit which God requires; and thirdly, that they *coincide* with his purpose or his sovereign pleasure, being such requests as in his wisdom he will deem it proper to grant. When all these circumstances concur, no doubt can be entertained that God will hear our prayers, and answer us in the very thing we ask. But this is adopting the principle advocated in the preceding remarks, that God is no farther bound by his general promise to hear the prayers of his people, than to give such things as in his wisdom he shall judge most suitable in the case. Not a few commentators, both ancient and modern, have regarded *this* as the true sense of the Apostle; and hence one remarks that the language here employed is a key to the promises made to prayer. But it may be asked if the very next words are not incompatible with this view: “And if we know that he hear us, *whatsoever we ask*, we know that we have the petitions we desired of him.” The terms are universal—“*whatsoever we ask*.” True: but let it be remembered it is *whatsoever we ask according to his will*. If the will of God, therefore, be taken to mean his *sovereign*, as well as his *preceptive* will, the limitation is the same as before. Still, it may be inquired, who shall decide this point? Perhaps the language intends no more than the *will of God* expressed in his commands; and then the declaration will be universal, that all things absolutely which we ask of God in prayer will be granted, provided they are things lawful, and sought in a right

spirit. Let the appeal then be made to facts; does God grant all that his people ask, even when they ask for things which he has commanded, and in the manner which he directs? He has commanded them to pray for the salvation of all men, and to pray with great fervency and importunity: and did never one of his children, not even Prophet or Apostle, obey this command? *perfectly* I do not ask, but *sincerely* and *acceptably*? Certain it is that, whatever may have been their prayers, the world still lieth in wickedness.

Look at another fact: the prayer of Moses that he might go over and see the good land which was beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon. This desire was natural, and, in itself considered, reasonable: he longed to see the inheritance of God's people, from the days of Abraham the subject of promise—the place where God would specially reveal his mercy, and fulfill his covenant with his chosen. But God would not hear his prayer: and why? Not because he was not sufficiently humble, or sufficiently in earnest; not because he did not take hold of the greatness of God's power, and the greatness of his mercy, for he plainly did both; but because God had otherwise determined. His prayer did not coincide with the Divine purpose. He had sinned at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in not sanctifying the Lord in the presence of his people; and God had doomed him to fall short of the promised land; nor was it in the power of prayer to reverse this sentence. Doubtless there were reasons pertaining to the Divine government which operated against the petition of Moses; but it is enough to say that God in his infinite wisdom did not see fit to grant it. Yet, as a proof of his acceptance of Moses, and that he was not displeased with his request, he sent him to the top of Pisgah, whence, with strengthened vision, "he showed him all the land which he sware unto his fathers," and said, "I have

~~caused thee to see~~ it with thine eyes; but thou shalt not go over thither."

Look at the case of David, when he prayed for the life of his child. He fasted, and wept, and lay all night upon the earth. Was he not truly humbled? was he not importunate? did he not go to God in the full belief that from his infinite benevolence he was disposed to hear prayer? For all that appears, he was never in a better frame of mind; and yet God did not grant the thing asked for. We may suppose, indeed, that God approved of his prayer as an act of worship, while it did not consist with his wise and holy purpose to grant the request. But it may be said that David had no *right* to pray for the life of the child, seeing its death had been denounced by the prophet. He had the same right, let it be remembered, that Hezekiah had to pray for his own life, after the prophet said to him: "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt *die* and *not live*." The truth is, neither David nor Hezekiah regarded the threatening as *absolute*. Had they done so, they would not have dared to interpose their supplications. But they supposed there was at least a peradventure in the case; and this encouraged them to pray. One, however, was heard, and the other was not. Can any other reason be assigned for this difference than that the prayer of one coincided with the Divine purpose, while that of the other did not coincide?

How was it with Paul, who thrice besought the Lord that the thorn in his flesh might be removed, and received for answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee?" It cannot be pretended that he was answered in the very thing which he asked; and yet, from the answer which he did receive, it seems impossible not to conclude that his prayer was acceptable as an act of duty. What shall we say of his constant and earnest prayer for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh? Did he not sin-

cerely and fervently desire their salvation? Did he not plead for it with increasing importunity? and yet, as a nation, they perished in their unbelief. There is, however, a still stronger case in the history of this Apostle: I mean the final perdition of some who enjoyed the benefit of his own ministry. Did he do his duty with regard to these men, or did he not? Most certainly he did not, unless he made their salvation the subject of solemn and earnest prayer. If he did his duty, why were they not saved, on the supposition that God has promised to grant whatsoever his people ask in a right manner? One of two things must be true, either that they perished through his unfaithfulness, or that, he being faithful, they perished notwithstanding. Which of these alternatives shall we take? If the first, we make the Apostle guilty of their blood, contrary to one of his most solemn appeals, that he was "pure from the blood of all men;" if the second, we give up the principle that God has promised to grant everything which his people ask, provided they ask in the manner which he has required.

From this extended view of the subject, what other conclusion can be drawn, than that the promises made to prayer must be understood with limitation in all cases where the will of God is not known.

If the question then return, how does faith regard the promises of God? our answer must be as before—it regards them as they are, and embraces them according to their true intent and design. *Absolute* promises it regards as absolute, *conditional* as conditional; those which are *definite* as holding true in every case, subject to no restriction or limitation; and those which are *general* or *indefinite* it regards as *indefinite*, and interprets them accordingly. Some of the promises it considers as specifically made to the Apostles, and others in the primitive Church, and not applicable to Christians in general; others as

belonging to Christians of all ages, and designed to awaken hope and encourage prayer.

But it may be asked, how can these promises encourage prayer unless we believe them? And if we believe them, do they not insure to us the very things we ask? Is it not said: "All things whatsoever ye ask, *believing*, ye shall receive?" and again: "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, and ye shall have them?" True: but these promises were made to the immediate disciples of Christ, who had the power of working miracles, and from the connection, it appears, ought to be limited to them and to others gifted with the same power. Whenever they exercised the faith necessary to a miracle, the Divine veracity stood pledged that the miracle should be performed. But as these promises were made to a peculiar kind of faith, it is evident that they cannot be applicable to Christians at large, by whom no such faith is exercised. But farther: suppose that these promises had respect to all true Christians equally, it is plain that they secure nothing until the events prayed for are believed. "*Believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them*," is the promise. It is not enough, of course, to believe that God is *able* to grant our petitions, we must believe that he *will*, or the condition of the promise is not complied with, and God is not bound. But how shall we come to this belief? We cannot come to it through the medium of the promise, because the promise pledges nothing, and secures nothing, until we actually believe. It affords no evidence that God will grant our requests, until we have first believed that he will grant them, and then the evidence comes too late to be the ground of our faith, because we have believed already. We cannot apply the promise until we have fulfilled the condition of the promise; but in fulfilling this condition we have exercised the faith required, which is a fact prior to the application of the promise,



and not subsequent to it; and consequently does not depend upon this application. It must be obvious, we think, to all, that faith in this case cannot depend on the promise, whatever else it depends on; but the promise, as to its obligatory force, depends on faith—which must always be presupposed before the promise can be applied. To suppose, as some have done, that faith is founded on the promise, is to suppose that the effect exists anterior to the cause, or that the effect has no cause: for until faith exists the promise avails nothing, as to the certainty or probability of the desired event, and cannot be the ground of faith, unless it be to believe that God will hear us, if we first believe that he will hear us. From what quarter, then, must the evidence be derived on which this prior faith is to be built? It cannot be drawn from the promise, as we have seen, for that pledges nothing until this faith is in being; nor from any other source, conceivable by us, short of an immediate and special revelation. That such a revelation is possible will readily be admitted, but it will be long, if we mistake not, before, in the judgment of the Christian world, it will be regarded as in any degree probable.

It is again inquired, however, if Christians do not draw near to God in the full assurance of faith, and if they are not required to ask in faith, nothing wavering? Certainly; this is their privilege, and this is their duty. But what is their faith *assured* of? Not that they shall receive everything they ask, whether it be best for them or otherwise; but that God is a being of infinite perfection, ready to do for his people more than they can ask or even think, and who will do all that they desire, unless his eternal wisdom shall decide to the contrary. This is what their faith is assured of, when it is grounded upon the Sacred Oracles. And is not this enough? Does not this place their hopes and expectations on the best possible foundation? Besides, let us suppose that

when they pray, they refer their petitions to the sovereign pleasure of God, as they ought most surely to do in all cases where that pleasure is not known. What is the import of such reference? Is it not that God *should grant or not grant*, as it may seem good in his sight? Let the event, then, be as it may, their prayers are virtually answered, though they receive not the very things they desired. They receive what is best for them, and so far as they were sincere in submitting the matter to the will of God, they have what they ultimately chose.

Should the question then return, with which this Lecture commenced, "*What is it to pray in faith, and how far has God bound himself to hear such prayer?*" the answer will be obvious. If the *faith* concerned be the faith of miracles, then it is to pray, believing that the very thing which is asked will be granted; but if reference be had to the faith common to all true Christians, then it is to pray firmly believing in the being and attributes of God, in the truth of his gracious promises, and in the general fact that he is ready to hear prayer, and to grant to his people whatsoever they ask *according to his will*, withholding nothing which he perceives best for them, and most for his glory. In all this, however, it is to be understood that we ask in Christ's name, and expect a gracious hearing on his account solely, as the great Mediator of the new covenant, through whom all the blessings of that covenant are bestowed.

We conclude this long discussion with two remarks.

And first: if we have taken a right view of this subject, it is easy to perceive that they must labor under a mistake, who imagine that their prayers shall infallibly be answered in the very thing they ask, provided they ask in the manner which God has prescribed, or in a way acceptable to him. They ask, it may be, for the conversion of an individual, or for many individuals; and if they ask with a certain degree of fervor, connected

with confidence in God as the hearer of prayer, they suppose that he is bound by his promise to grant their requests; and hence it has been common for such persons not only to indulge the hope that their prayers will be literally answered—a circumstance which we do not condemn—but to predict with confidence that the thing prayed for will certainly be given. They are sometimes heard to say that they have gotten a promise to this effect, because, as God has promised to hear prayer of a certain character, and believing that they themselves have offered such prayer, they conclude that God is now pledged by his promise, and will verify it to them. Their mistake, however, lies in this: God has made no such promise as they suppose to prayers which his people offer to him in the exercise of a true and living faith. They construe the promise as if it were *definite* or *universal*; holding true in every case, and subject to no limitation or restriction; whereas we believe, and have endeavored to show, that the promise is *indefinite* in all cases where the will or purpose of God is not known; of course, that the veracity of God is not pledged to grant the very things we solicit, but that he gives or withholds according to his sovereign pleasure. But, to prevent all misconception, let me explicitly state that there is the utmost encouragement to pray, and that the hopes of God's people may justly rise high that he will hear and answer their prayers, and often in the very things which they desire; that they have cause to hope the more, the more their hearts are drawn out to him, the more they can see of his glory, and lie at his feet, and exalt his eternal majesty in their hearts; the more they can take hold of his strength, and apprehend the truth of his promises; the more they can see of Jesus, the great Mediator, at the right hand of God, and the stronger their reliance upon the fullness of his righteousness, and the preciousness of his blood. Nay, they may have so

much hope, arising from these and other circumstances, that God intends to hear their prayers in the very things which they ask, as to indulge in a prevailing expectation that he will; but they have no certainty, nor can they arrive at it by any process whatever. God is not bound, nor can they certainly tell what he will do until the event shall declare it, unless you suppose a special revelation.

But I hear it said, would God breathe into my heart such desires, so *sincere*, so *ardent*, unless he intended to answer them? I may reply, it is not very probable, but still there is no certainty. Had not Paul very sincere and ardent desires for the salvation of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh? and were not these desires the fruit of the Spirit? These desires, however, though often expressed in prayer, were not granted. And it may be so with respect to many who offer fervent prayers now. Besides, where has God said that he will not *move* his people to feel and pray as they ought to do, without giving them the very things which they ask? Are they not bound to plead for every blessing, and especially for spiritual blessings, with the utmost sincerity, and, where the blessing is supremely important, with all the strength and fervor of their souls? Would they not thus plead if they were perfectly sanctified? and would it not be a privilege to plead in this manner, though God should not always grant the very thing which they desire? Who can say that God does not often impart this spirit of prayer chiefly for the purpose of bringing his children near to him, and perfecting that holy fellowship which they have with the Father and the Son?

Far be it from us to dampen the faith and hope of Christians by these remarks, or in any degree to diminish the proper inducements to prayer. Would that they might feel a thousand times more confidence in the

power, and wisdom, and grace, and covenant faithfulness of God than they do, and that they took a far deeper interest in the cause of truth and the salvation of their fellow-men! But we desire to guard against a spirit of presumption, and to promote a correct mode of thinking and speaking on this deeply momentous subject.

2d. We remark, secondly, that as we have no authority for predicting any particular event simply on the ground of our prayers, as though God had bound himself to grant whatsoever we desire, so, on the other hand, it is venturing too far to assert that we shall not have this or that mercy unless we pray for it. We must be careful not to limit God where he has not limited himself. There are many favors which he ordinarily gives in answer to prayer, and some perhaps which he will not give unless duly solicited at his hand. But it is wise in us not to invade his sovereignty, nor to set bounds to his goodness where *he* has set none. It is usual for God to connect the salvation of children with the fidelity of parents; and if a parent is unfaithful, and neither prays nor labors for the conversion of his children, as he ought to do, it might justly be said that he has little or no reason to expect their conversion. It is God's usual method to connect revivals of religion with the prayers and fidelity of Christians in those places where revivals occur; and it might be proper to say that Christians have no reason to expect a revival in such places, while they remain in a great measure indifferent to this object, and neither pray nor labor for it with becoming zeal. But is it not going too far to assert that this is God's only method of building up his cause? that a revival will never be experienced and sinners converted until Christians awake and cry mightily to God for the descent of his Spirit? in other words, that God will not pour out his Spirit upon a congregation but in answer to solemn and special prayer by his people for this object? Such language is

often employed, but we think it *unguarded*: it is warranted neither by the tenor of God's promises nor by the events of his providence. He does more for his people often than they ask, and sometimes surprises them by a mercy which they neither looked for nor requested. I could mention several important revivals of religion, (nearly twenty,) if an ingathering of souls into the Redeemer's kingdom ought to be so denominated, which were not preceded, so far as human eyes could discern, by any special spirit of prayer on the part of the Lord's people. They were manifestly asleep when the heavenly bridegroom came, and were roused into action only by his almighty voice calling dead sinners from the tomb.

Such events do not happen to exculpate the *unbelief*, the *slothfulness* and *stupidity* of Christians, but to display God's sovereignty, and to overwhelm us with the boundless riches of his mercy.

I know it may be said that it is not easy to determine whether such revivals as I have alluded to, were not, after all, the immediate answer to prayer. Some person, however obscure or unheeded, may have prayed for them some time or other, if not immediately preceding their commencement. This, indeed, is possible, though no evidence can be produced of the fact. But, were this admitted, one thing is certain—the churches, as collective bodies, were asleep, and this is enough for our purpose. It shows that the blessing was not necessarily suspended on their prayers—at least those solemn and earnest prayers to which the promise of God is evidently made. God has promised, for the purpose of encouraging his people to pray; and he fulfills his promises in such circumstances, and often with such particularity, as to inspire his people with confidence and joy; but this hinders not the display of his sovereign mercy towards individuals and communities, whenever and wherever

he may judge it will subserve the purpose of his glory. Let us beware, then, of taking ground which he himself has not taken, and of dealing out assertions concerning the operations of his grace which neither his Word nor providence will sustain. At the same time, let us also beware that our very caution do not betray us into lukewarmness and unbelief; and that, under a pretext of Divine sovereignty, we excuse our want of zeal in the cause of man's salvation. We act under a fearful responsibility, and danger awaits us on every side. Our only safety lies in making God's Word the rule of our faith, and his glory the end of our actions. May he give to us that *humble, inquisitive* and *impartial* spirit which is intimately connected with successful investigation, and which will be the surest pledge of our understanding and obeying the truth.



## LECTURE XXI.

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### ON APOSTACY.

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**HEBREWS vi. 4, 5, 6.**—"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

WE have, in these words, the character and doom of those who openly apostatize from the Christian faith, after having been greatly enlightened, and the subjects of supernatural gifts. It is evidently no ordinary or occasional backsliding of which the Apostle speaks, but one which is deep and entire—an apostacy from the principles and hopes of the Gospel, marked with the bitterest contempt for the Lord Jesus, and for the Divine Spirit, by whose mighty signs and wonders the Gospel was at first attested to the world. For apostates of this guilty character, the Apostle asserts there is no hope; not because God has not power to reclaim them, but because it is against his purpose to interpose in their behalf. In having willfully opposed the light imparted by the preaching of the Gospel, and by the miraculous operations of the Spirit, they were virtually guilty of the sin which is unto death, and, of course, cut themselves off from the Divine favor forever. On this point, so far as I know, there is no difference of opinion; commentators, with one voice, admit that the apostacy here spoken



of is final and irremediable. They admit, also, that it was the design of the Apostle to put his Hebrew brethren on their guard against an apostacy of this fearful character. But the question which has been long agitated is, who are they that stand exposed to this apostacy? They are persons, doubtless, whose privileges and attainments are here described—"those who were once enlightened." But who are these? Are they true Christians? and does the Apostle, in this place, describe Christian character? or does he speak of such only, as were greatly distinguished by their peculiar gifts and attainments, while, nevertheless, they fell short of true piety?

We ask your attention to the remarks which may be made in answer to these inquiries. And let me here say, it is of the more importance that we come to a correct interpretation of this passage, because as we expound this, we shall be led to expound several others in the sacred volume; while the principles we adopt in this explication will be likely to shape our views on other topics of Christianity.

By those who deny the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, it has been universally contended that the Apostle, in this place, describes the character of true Christians, and hence they infer that there is no certain connection between any measure of spiritual attainments and the salvation of the soul. The terms employed they consider as appropriately describing Christian character; and since the Apostle, in the warning which he administers, goes upon the principle that there is danger of falling from the state here described, they entertain no doubt that true Christians may fall finally and irrecoverably. If no danger, say they, why caution? And danger there could not be, if God has pledged himself, by his almightiness, that no true Christian shall apostatize.

But we cannot admit this interpretation, for several reasons.

1st. Because the terms employed by the Apostle, though descriptive of high spiritual attainments, are not the terms usually employed to designate the Christian character. They are not properly discriminative of this character, as we shall endeavor to show in the sequel.

2d. Because this interpretation stands opposed to numerous passages of Scripture which assert, in the most decisive manner, the covenant safety of the people of God. It does not fall in with our present purpose, to enter into the proof of this statement. We shall only say, it is upon no light ground, we believe that those who are united to Christ by a living faith, are united to him in a bond which is indissoluble and eternal. "My sheep hear my voice," said the Saviour, "I know them, and they follow me, and I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." We cannot, therefore, subscribe to an interpretation which is so manifestly at war with the plain and unequivocal testimony of God. Nor,

3d. Can we yield to it for another reason, viz., that it ill accords with the words of the Apostle which immediately follow. Having spoken of the deplorable end of those who should finally apostatize, he adds, by way of illustration: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Under the emblem of different soils he sets forth the different character of Christian professors. By the fruitful soil he represents true believers, who receiving the word into good and honest hearts, bring forth fruit unto perfection, and of course stand secure in the Divine favor. And by the unfruitful soil, or that

which beareth thorns and briers, he designates those whose fallow ground was never broken up, and who, though they receive the word even with joy, still have no root in themselves, and in time of temptation may fall away. The one class, like the fruitful earth, receiveth blessing from God; the other, like the barren earth, is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. "But beloved," says the Apostle, "we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak." As if there were some things which did accompany salvation, or were infallibly connected with it, and others which did not thus accompany it. The former I take to be the better things which the Apostle was persuaded were possessed by his beloved brethren, and which would not only secure them against final apostacy, but entitle them to the Divine favor. But as he did not know their hearts, and fearing there might be some among them who, with all their spiritual gifts, had not believed to the saving of their souls, he deemed it important to address them in the language of warning, and to guard them against an apostacy, into which were they to fall, they could not be recovered. This view of the case supplies a reason for the manner of his address, without supposing it doubtful whether, if true believers, they would certainly persevere. Nay, the very fact of distinguishing between things which accompany salvation and things which do not, is a clear indication of the ground which he takes; and that this ground is not, that if true Christians they were liable to fall, and fall irrecoverably, for ought he or they knew to the contrary; but an apprehension that they were not all true Christians, however distinguished by their gifts or attainments. But there is another opinion, which, to some extent, has prevailed in this country, and which, though of modern origin, deserves to be considered. It is this. That the Apostle describes Christian character in this passage, and

Christian character only, while there is no intimation that Christians ever do, in fact, utterly fall away, but only if they should fall, they could not again be recovered. It is supposed that the Apostle speaks hypothetically—putting a case which is physically possible but morally impossible—and putting it for the purpose of awakening fear, and thus to prevent the evil against which he warns. Two things here are worthy of notice. The first is, that we find nothing in the original which is answerable to the hypothetical form in our translation. It is not there said if they shall fall away, but, in the judgment of several able critics, “and having fallen away,” implying a case which might in fact occur, and which, without great circumspection, probably would occur. The second thing is, that on the above view of the passage it is not easy to see to what purpose the Apostle should introduce this subject to the notice of Christian professors; if they were false professors it did not belong to them, they had no concern in it. And if they were true professors, it implies a case which he and they knew could never become theirs. To tell them what would happen or what would not happen, upon the occurrence of an event which it was well known never would occur, does not seem adapted to work either upon their hopes or their fears. But perhaps the design of the Apostle was merely to state a fact important for all true Christians to know, viz.: that they must persevere in order to be saved; and that all their attainments would be vain without this. If this were his object, why does he dwell upon the guilt and deplorable consequences of an entire apostacy aggravating every circumstance, as if intending to alarm his Christian brethren with an event, dreadful in itself, and, in point of fact, likely to happen? All this would seem to be unnecessary, not to say out of place, if his only design was to state the fact that perseverance in well-doing was essential to salvation. Would any

person at this day, who believes in the final perseverance of the saints, take such a method to assure his brethren that they only who endure unto the end can be saved? But I hear it said, doubtless the Apostle had the further intention of exciting the fears of his Christian brethren, and by means of those fears to preserve them from final apostacy. There cannot be a doubt, indeed, that such was the fact. But how does this fact agree with the supposition that he had been describing the character and condition of true believers only? This is vital to the subject, and I hope will arrest your attention. Would the Christian Hebrews be concerned about the issue of their salvation by being told that if true believers should fall away, an event which they knew never had happened, and never would, they could not again be recovered. How could they be made to fear an event with respect to themselves, which, on the supposition that they were true Christians, was just as impossible as for God himself to lie? and which, if they were not true Christians, did not concern them at all? For let it be remembered that on the present hypothesis it is of the apostacy of true Christians that the Apostle speaks. But do not true Christians sometimes fear their own apostacy? And may not this very fear be a means of their preservation? So we most certainly believe. But pray, how is this fear to be excited? By telling them of what they know never did happen and never will? Or by telling them what every man in the Christian world knows to be fact, viz.: that men may go great lengths in religion without being truly religious; may have great knowledge, great gifts and high hopes, and yet fall away irrecoverably. The Church has witnessed such facts from the beginning, and it is scarcely possible that they should not awaken fear in the bosom of true Christians, especially if they have not reached, and do not live in the full assurance of hope. But let us sift this matter to the

bottom. The present interpretation supposes that the doctrine of the saints' perseverance is a true doctrine; of course that the Apostle and the Christians to whom he was writing believed it. Now I have to request of every man who receives the same doctrine to examine his own mind upon this subject. Is he ever afraid, if a true Christian, that he shall not persevere? Does he ever dwell upon the awful consequences of a true Christian's apostacy, and harrow up his mind with the tremendous guilt and hopeless nature of such a case? No? We dare make our appeal to the bosom of every man, that this is an object which never arrests his attention for a single moment. He dreads no such thing, and for this plain reason, he knows it can never take place, if the doctrine of the saints' perseverance be true. All his fears spring from another source; peradventure, he says to himself, I am not a true Christian; my experience may be nothing beyond the experience of hypocrites or self-deceived persons. This is the ground, and the only ground, on which fear can assail him so long as he is firmly persuaded that no true Christian will ever finally fall away. Are we then to believe, with so plain a case before us, that the Apostle would attempt to alarm his Christian brethren with respect to their own safety, on principles and by means which would in no degree alarm us? That he would solemnly declare to them that true believers could never be recovered from an apostacy which would never happen! And yet, to this absurdity we are necessarily brought by supposing that he describes true Christians in the words before us, and as such warns them against an irrecoverable fall. Nor will it relieve the difficulty in our apprehension, by resorting to a distinction sometimes made, that a thing may be physically possible, while it is morally impossible. For supposing an event to be physically possible while it is known to be morally impossi-

ble, or morally certain that it will never occur, can it, in these circumstances, be an object either of hope or of fear? Surely it will not be pretended that I can hope for an object which I know to be unattainable, let the cause of its unattainableness be what it may. And with as little justness can it be said that I can fear an object which I have the highest assurance will never exist. Did ever a man hope for the recovery of the finally lost, who firmly believes in the doctrine of eternal punishment? Or did ever a man fear that saints will fall from the fruition of heaven, who has not one doubt of the permanence of their bliss? The thing is in a high degree irrational, and can never take place while the laws of the human mind remain what they are.

But after all it may be said, how can the expressions in our text—so full in themselves, and so multiplied one upon another—be understood of any but of true believers? Have any but true believers been once enlightened? tasted of the heavenly gift? been made partakers of the Holy Ghost? tasted the good word of God? and the powers of the world to come? Yes, my dear brethren, there were persons in the Apostles' day, to whom all these expressions were strictly applicable, though they had never been renewed in the temper of their minds, nor possessed of one particle of that faith to which the promise of eternal life is annexed. These are not the terms, striking as they are, which are usually employed to designate the Christian character. Nothing is here said of that sorrow for sin which is after a godly sort; of that faith which is unfeigned—of that charity which seeketh not her own—nor of that brotherly love which is the bond of perfectness; nothing, in short, of any of those graces which are the fruits of the Spirit, and which decisively mark the regenerated man. Not one of the circumstances here dwelt upon, can be appealed to as substantial evidence of that holiness with-

out which no man shall see the Lord. Striking view, indeed, are given of privilege and attainment—but nothing is said of those things which the Scriptures elsewhere lay down as unquestionable marks of true piety. Of this we shall be better satisfied after examining briefly the terms here employed.

I begin with the phrase “those who were once enlightened;” that is, as I understand it, and as it is understood by most commentators, those who had been enlightened by the light of Christianity or by the truths of the Gospel. That the phrase has sometimes a more extended signification and applies to those who are savingly illuminated, we cheerfully concede. But that it is often otherwise, and means no more than to be speculatively enlightened by the truth, must be admitted by those who are at all conversant with the sacred writings. It is thus used in the tenth chapter of this Epistle; and also in the fourth chapter of the Ephesians, where the Apostle declares that he was appointed to preach among the Gentiles the unspeakable riches of Christ, “that he might make all men see,” or, as it might be rendered, “that he might show light to all, so as to make them see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ.” The Sacred Scriptures abound with expressions of kindred import. Jesus Christ is called the light of the world, and the light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world; not because he imparts spiritual and saving light to all, but because the light of Divine truth was widely diffused by means of his ministry and that of his Apostles. John, his forerunner, was a light, and the Pharisees for a season were willing to rejoice in his light—not because he was to them the instrument of saving illumination, but because the light of his doctrines powerfully and favorably affected them for a time. The Gospel is called a light, inasmuch as it imparts the light of Divine truth to



the understandings of men. "This is the condemnation that light hath come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." Truth, so far as it is received, dispels the darkness of ignorance; and hence to receive the knowledge of the truth, and to be enlightened, are expressions of equivalent import.

Can it then be any matter of surprise that the Apostle should characterize those who were in danger of apostacy by their having been once enlightened? Since whatever speculative light they might have, it was no evidence of a renovated heart, and no effectual security against an open and irrecoverable fall? But should the expression be taken in a still wider sense, so as to include some extraordinary illumination of the Divine Spirit, it would not follow that the subjects of it were savingly enlightened. It might still be true of them that they never beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, nor were changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Was not Balaam extraordinarily enlightened, when he predicted the prosperity of Israel, and the coming of the Messiah? as well as his own future condemnation? "Balaam, the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said—he hath said who heard the words of God and knowledge of the Most High—I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the four corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Here was a man enlightened, and enlightened in a miraculous manner, but whose mind was never savingly illuminated, nor his heart brought into sweet subjection to God. Nor is it in the least degree improbable that this was the case with some of whom the Apostle speaks in the clause under consideration.

(2.) But he describes those, also, who had not only

been enlightened, but had tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. I consider these two clauses together, because in the judgment of some commentators they both refer to one and the same thing, viz. : the gift of the Spirit—not in his sanctifying but in his convicting influence, and perhaps also in his miraculous power, by which he imparted extraordinary gifts. That many persons were subjects of the Spirit's convincing influence in the Apostolic age, without ever being quickened to a new and holy life, nobody doubts, who believes in the agency of the Spirit at all. Nor ought it to be doubted that the very same persons were often made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his miraculous power, in consequence of which they were enabled not only to speak with tongues and to prophesy, but to heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cast out devils. To our short-sighted understandings, it may appear strange that unholy men should be thus miraculously endowed. But from the words of the New Testament the fact is unquestionable : and this fact is not, as we might suppose, here and there an instance of the kind, but instances in great numbers. "Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works, to whom I will say, I never knew you ; depart from me ye that work iniquity."

It is not improbable that Judas wrought as many miracles for a time as did the other Apostles. Nor is there anything in the case which should either surprise or stumble us. Miraculous gifts imply no new nature, and could no more infer God's peculiar favor in the Apostles' days, than the distinguishing gifts of his common providence can in ours. Paul seems to have well understood this when he said : "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ; and though I

have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing," which supposes not only that there is no infallible connection between these gifts and the sanctifying grace of God, but that the subjects of them may be worthless in his sight, and fall under the tokens of his everlasting displeasure. If any choose to say, as some have done, that tasting the heavenly gift relates to the instruction and to the privilege of living under the Christian economy, which is certainly the gift of heaven, we have nothing to object; and if to be partakers of the Holy Ghost should be interpreted simply to be endowed with miraculous gifts, no important error will be advanced whether the whole truth be embraced or not. But let it not be forgotten, that all this is very far short of true piety.

(3.) Moreover, as tasting the heavenly gift and being made partakers of the Holy Ghost, carry us to nothing which distinguishes the true believer, so we think, that tasting the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, makes no greater approximation to the Christian character.

To taste the good Word of God, doubtless implies not merely an acquaintance with this Word, but a pleasure experienced in listening to its counsels, and in contemplating the blessings which it tenders. And, possibly, it may imply that hope is awakened and fear allayed, and even joy enkindled in view of the merciful provisions which it announces to the guilty; for all this is not unfrequently experienced by those who do not sincerely comply with the conditions of the Gospel. How was it with the stony-ground hearers, mentioned by our Lord in the parable? They heard the Word, and anon with joy received it, but not into a good and honest heart; and, consequently, did not embrace it from right motives. There was no deepness of earth, where the seed

fell, and, therefore, no security that when it should spring up, it would not wither away. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things; but he did not truly repent, nor forsake sin. And thousands who were charmed with the preaching of Christ, and rejoiced in his ministry for a time, afterwards forsook him and joined with those who demanded his crucifixion. How many cases have we all seen of persons deeply affected by the Word of Truth, and professing cordially to embrace it, who, in the end, gave mournful evidence that the image of their Saviour was never drawn upon their hearts. Such instances were numerous in the first ages of the Church. Nor is it strange or unnatural to suppose, that the Apostle had his eye turned especially to them.

But he speaks of those who had not only tasted the good Word of God, but the powers of the world to come; that is, as is commonly supposed, of the age to come, meaning the Gospel dispensation, so called because it succeeded, and was predicted to succeed, the Jewish dispensation. Understanding then, by the world to come, the Gospel or coming age, it will be natural to interpret the powers of this age, of the miraculous powers or gifts which attended the introduction of Christianity, and which were tasted or experienced by the persons of whom the Apostle speaks.

But as this would be little more than a repetition of what had been said of the same persons when they were declared to be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, some have preferred another interpretation; and by tasting or experiencing the powers of the world to come, would understand some vivid apprehensions of another and eternal world—such views, say of heaven and hell, as awakened in these persons a deep concern for their eternal welfare, and put them upon vigorous efforts to secure it; a case often witnessed in times of religious revivals, where no evidence is given of being born of

God, and where no hope is indulged that any such change has been effected.

But take either of these interpretations, and we shall be compelled to admit that they embrace nothing which is peculiar or essential to Christian character. There is indeed but a single article in this whole description, according to a late Biblical critic, which contains anything properly discriminative of true piety; and for this, he exhibits no evidence from the power and force of the words themselves, nor from the connection in which they stand to other parts of the description. The phrase to which he alludes is, "and have tasted the good Word of God;" that is, according to his interpretation, "have experienced or known by experience the good Word of God, or the good contained in its promises;" referring, as he thinks, to the consolations administered, or to the hopes excited, by the promises of the Gospel. Now, we have no doubt that the persons spoken of had experience, and experience of the good Word of God; that their hopes were awakened by its promises, and peradventure their joys excited. But the question is, What was the nature of their experience? Was it of a sanctifying and transforming character? Nothing of this is implied or intimated; and it is certainly somewhat singular that every other characteristic given in this passage confessedly falls short of true piety, while this alone is supposed to embrace it. The fact is, as we believe, that the Apostle throughout designedly selected such terms as would mark high and peculiar privileges and attainments, but would not necessarily involve Christian character. We must not protract this discussion, or we should deem it important, in supporting the views we have taken, to compare our text with several other passages in the Apostle's writings, particularly with what is said in chapters x. and xii. of this epistle. In both places the Apostle speaks of a final and irrecover-

able apostacy, which he feared might actually overtake some of his brethren, and which he wished them to fear in regard to one another. He speaks of it as an event which might actually occur, for aught he or they knew to the contrary, and bids them beware of the very first steps or leadings to such an apostacy. Nay, in the twelfth chapter he brings forward an example of an individual who, for treating with negligence and contempt the special advantages he enjoyed, not only exposed himself to lose, but actually did lose, the important blessings in his offer. "Looking diligently," says he, "lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, and found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." To what purpose was this reference to the case of Esau, unless it was analogous to the one which the Apostle was endeavoring to illustrate—an apostacy from exalted privilege, not from Christian character, accompanied with certain and irremediable ruin? Some have thought that Esau, by profanely despising his birthright, cut himself off finally from the blessings of God's covenant. If this were so, his case was not merely analogous to that of apostates under the Christian dispensation; it was virtually an example of such apostacy, inasmuch as by despising the advantage put into his hands, he forfeited the friendship of God and brought down upon his guilty head the vengeance due to his sacrilegious contempt. But how unmeaning, not to say impertinent, would such an example be, if the Apostle was speaking of an apostacy of true Christians—an apostacy which he and his brethren knew never had happened and never would!

I ask your attention to a single illustration more. It is taken from a passage in the Second Epistle of Peter, compared with a similar one found in Jude.

After speaking of those who had forsaken the right way—not of those simply who were in danger of forsaking it; of those, I say, who *had* forsaken the right way, and were gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Besor; of those who were wells without water, and clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever; persons whose judgment now a long time lingered not, and whose damnation slumbered not; who spoke great swelling words of vanity, promising others liberty, while they themselves were the servants of corruption; persons who could surely be none other than actual apostates from the Christian faith. After speaking of such persons, he adds: “For, if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb: ‘The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

Two facts lie upon the face of this passage.

1st. That the persons here described were never true Christians; their moral nature had undergone no change, through the renewing operations of the Holy Spirit. They were dogs and swine, possessed of an unclean nature from the beginning, though for a season apparently corrected in their impure habits. And,

2d. That they had actually apostatized, and stood exposed to the just judgments of God. That their apostacy

was final and irremediable, is generally conceded, and cannot well be denied, after looking at their opinions and practice, and considering the awful denunciations which the Apostle has made concerning them. If sinning willfully and presumptuously, after having received the knowledge of the truth, (as these persons most certainly had,) can cut a man off from the hopes of Divine mercy, and render his perdition inevitable, there is not the least reason to doubt that Peter here speaks of those whose apostacy was irrecoverable, having drawn back unto perdition.

I ask, then, is this case parallel, so far as Christian character is concerned, with the one presented in our text? I know that Peter speaks of an apostacy which had happened, and Paul of one which might happen; but is the apostacy mentioned by both writers, from among the same class of persons, and substantially of the same character? If this should be conceded, and some of our modern expositors concede it, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion, either that true Christians do sometimes utterly fall away, or that the Christian character is not described in the words of our text.

We have already exceeded the usual limits of a single discourse; but there are two or three objections to the opinion we have advanced which require a brief notice.

The first is, that if the persons described in our text were not true Christians, but evidently fell short of this character, why was the Apostle so solicitous about their apostacy, seeing they would perish where they were, though they should never apostatize? Ought he not rather to have addressed them as hypocrites, and exhorted them to repentance, instead of bidding them take heed lest they should fall?

This objection, let me say, overlooks an important fact which governed the Apostle in his addresses to the



churches, viz., that he did not know the hearts of his Christian brethren. Whether they were or were not what they professed to be was more than he could tell. He had his hopes, and with regard to some of them, very joyful hopes ; but he had his fears also. Many who had begun in the spirit had ended in the flesh, and how many more would do so time alone could determine. He was obliged, therefore, to address them in their collective capacity, as professors of religion, in whom his confidence was more or less strong, as their work and labor of love had been more or less conspicuous. He could not distinguish, if he would, between those whose hearts were truly renovated and those who fell short of this change, though in gifts and supernatural attainments they ranked as high as others. He was placed in the same circumstances, in relation to them, as ministers of the Gospel are to their people now ; and his address to them proceeds exactly upon the same principles. He warns and expostulates, encourages and reproves, just as a faithful pastor would do at the present day. It was eminently fit and becoming, therefore, that he should put them on their guard against an apostacy which had proved fatal to many, and which he had every reason to fear might prove so to some of them. But it would have been exceedingly unfit and improper to assume the fact of their hypocrisy or self-deception, whether as individuals or as a body, and then to exhort them to repentance ; and the more so, if no clear proof existed, either of their hypocrisy or deception ? We should instantly condemn such a course in a minister of the Gospel at the present day, and why not in the Apostle, had he been so unwise as to fall into it.

But why, it is asked, was he so afraid of their apostacy, if not true Christians, seeing they must perish to all eternity, living and dying as they were ? Let me tell you. In the first place, he feared this on their own

account. In their present state, supposing them not true Christians, there was ground to hope that they might be, considering the mercy of God, and the many appropriate means they enjoyed. But were they openly to apostatize from the Christian faith, and to fall back again into Judaism, which seemed to be the danger, all hope in their case would forever be extinguished, and they must lie down in bitter and unavailing sorrow.

In the second place, the Apostle feared on account of others. Their apostacy, he knew, would exert a deleterious influence on multitudes, both within and without the Church—weakening and discouraging those within, and scandalizing and destroying those without. The apostacy of Christian professors has, in every age, been among the greatest hindrances to the progress of the Gospel, and inflicted the deepest wounds upon its friends. Was there, then, or was there not, a ground for the Apostle's solicitude, lest some of these Christian Hebrews should apostatize from the faith, though he should suppose this to occur only among those who had never been truly born of God?

2d. But another and more weighty objection to the interpretation we have given, is taken from the Apostle's declaration—That it is impossible to renew again to repentance those who have fallen away; implying, as is supposed, that they had actually been renewed once, but could not be renewed the second time. This has been urged with great confidence, but, as we believe, without sufficient examination. Let the word *καλν*, or again, be referred to falling away, instead of the renewing to repentance, as Mr. Pool thinks admissible according to Greek usage, and we have a sense perfectly free from embarrassment. The Apostle, in this case, is made simply to assert that it is impossible to renew to repentance, or truly to convert those who, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, had again fallen away. Apart

from the exigency of the case, this construction is rendered the more probable from the fact that the same Apostle uses similar language, on a like subject, in his Epistle to the Galatians, (Gal. iv. 9.) "But now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements," (meaning the Jewish rites and ceremonies,) "whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage." How turn ye again? Not that they had turned once before, and were now turning the second time to those weak and beggarly elements. The meaning plainly is, how is it that ye return or go back to the state of bondage whence ye came? It is of an apostacy to Judaism that the Apostle speaks, both to the Hebrews and to the Galatians, and would it be any matter of wonder if he should use language in the same sense when speaking precisely of the same subject? But allow us the construction here suggested, and the argument urged in the objection is entirely swept away. But doubtless we shall be told that the adverb *καλιν*, or again, is designed to qualify the word before which it stands, and not the word which immediately precedes it, so that we are not at liberty to join it to which we please. Let me only say, that there are forty instances, at least, in the New Testament alone, where it is otherwise, and it is otherwise in the parallel passage referred to in Galatians; here the adverb stands after the word which it qualifies—a fact of some importance in this discussion. But we would not rest our interpretation upon any such difference of grammatical usage. Let it be as our opponents would have it, and construe the passage as our translators have done, that it is impossible to renew again to repentance those who fall away. There is still an answer to be made, which, to my own mind at least, is convincing. The answer is this: that the adverb here is a pleonism, and alters not the sense of the verb to renew. Such is the opinion of

Schleusner, of the use of the word in this place, and also in that of Galatians to which we have already alluded. In both cases, he supposes the sense of the word to be complete, without the additional word *καλν* or again. Nor can we suppose that his judgment was warped, on this occasion, by a desire to maintain any Calvinistic dogma. But without referring to the critical opinions or discussions of others, who does not know that in our language, at least, we are in the constant habit of using the word again merely for the sake of emphasis, without implying a repetition of what had been said or done before.

Jesus said to Martha, thy brother shall rise again. I know, said Martha, that he shall rise again at the last day. Not that he had risen once and was expected to rise the second time, but simply that he should rise from the dead, or be restored to life. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus' Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope." Did anybody ever suppose the Apostle meant to assert here that Christians were a second time begotten to a lively hope, because he says you were begotten again? Or did our translators suppose this? for I refer more particularly to the language which they employ. We all know, indeed, that here was a second generation, but not a second generation to a lively hope; and yet, if the word again had the force of repetition, or of second in relation to the first, this absurd consequence would follow. All agree, however, to consider it as pleonastic, or at most, as emphatic, designed to express with a little more strength the fact that these Christians were begotten to a lively hope of an eternal inheritance. And where now, let me ask, lies the impropriety of giving the same sense to the word again in the passage under consideration? That the Greeks often used their *καλν* in a sense similar to this, there can be no reason to doubt.

Let this term then be referred even to the renewing spoken of in our text, or to the falling away, and it will draw after it no such inference as our opponents imagine, but leave our interpretation free and unembarrassed. There are other objections of minor importance, which, did time allow, we might take leave to consider. I name one or two. It is said that Paul expresses his fear of final perdition after he was a Christian, and after he had the happiness to know that this was his character, which cannot be reconciled with our statement that there is no ground to fear any such result with regard to the established believer. But I ask how does it appear that the Apostle was the subject of any such apprehensions? Why, he says "he kept his body under, lest after preaching to others he himself should be a cast-away." This is certainly his language, but if we advert to the connection we shall instantly perceive that it authorizes no such conclusion. "So run I not as uncertainly; so fight I not as one that beateth the air; but I keep my body under, lest after preaching to others I myself should be a cast-away."

He had a race to run, and he must not stop in the midst of his course; perseverance to the end, he knew, was essential to his obtaining the prize. But was he doubtful whether he should persevere and obtain the crown? Nothing can be wider from the fact. "So run I not as uncertainly." He had a definite object, and was sure of winning it. He had a conflict to sustain, but this was neither trifling in itself, nor uncertain in its issue. It called forth all his powers, and pointed to a victory which he was sure to win; not by his own unaided strength, but by the power of the spirit which rested upon him. But notwithstanding his confidence of victory, you may say, he was afraid of being a cast-away, and therefore kept his body under. We do not so understand him. "Keeping his body under, lest he

should be a cast-away," implies no more than using the appropriate means to secure an important end. Self-denial was necessary to salvation; but not self-denial for a few days, but a perseverance in this duty. Nothing short of this would save him from being a cast-away, and secure the final approbation of his Judge. This fact he fully recognized, and governed himself accordingly. And this is all the passage teaches. It neither intimates nor admits that he has any doubts or fears as to final results.

A similar objection may be urged, from the language of Paul, in Acts xxvii.: "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." But was this the language of fear? Had he any doubts or misgivings, as to the ultimate salvation of the ship's crew? Did he not firmly believe God, who had positively and explicitly promised their safety? There seems no reason for doubt. But though he expressed and believed that all would be saved, he expected this result in the way, or by the means which God appointed; and this way he announces, when he says to the centurion and soldiers, "Except these (meaning the sailors) abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." The end was certain, but the means to it were no less certain; and both were of God's appointment. The end would not take place without the means; and this is what he asserts, while, at the same time, he distinctly informs them that the continuance of the sailors in the ship was an indispensable part of these means. There is no evidence that *he* had any doubts or fears as to the final issue.

But did he not address the fears of others? This must depend upon the confidence which the centurion and the soldiers had in Paul's testimony, that none of them should ultimately be lost. If they had an unwavering assurance of this fact, there is no necessity of supposing that they acted from fear, when they cut the ropes, and

let the boat fall into the sea ; but only from a prompt regard to the Divine intimation that their salvation was connected with the seamen's abiding in the ship. The probability is, that they had fear, and that they took the course which Paul suggested, because they deemed it the most prudent, in the perils which surrounded them. Little as they knew of the Apostle, they could not well be certain, that his announcement of the final safety of the ship's crew would be verified. They doubtless hoped it would, and thought it best to be governed by his counsel. But they could not positively *know*, until the event should decide. Admitting, therefore, that they had fears, and that these fears were addressed by the Apostle, as the means of their salvation, it furnishes no objection to the doctrine advocated in this Lecture, because the case here is not parallel with that of true believers, provided they have the full assurance of hope, and provided, also, the doctrine of the saint's perseverance be true. The centurion and soldiers had no certainty as to the issue of their perils, on any condition, and might well, therefore, fear the result ; but in the case of true believers, known and considered as such, there is no ground to fear. By the promise and oath of God, they are positively assured of eternal life, and can no more doubt of this, than they can doubt the veracity of Jehovah.

We retain, therefore, the undiminished conviction, that the language of the Apostle, in the passage which stands at the head of this Lecture, can be justly interpreted of those only who are distinguished by their privileges and attainments ; not of those who believe to the saving of the soul.



## LECTURE XXII.

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### ABILITY AND INABILITY.

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JOHN vi. 44.—“No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.”

It is good for us to be humbled—and God has declared it to be a leading design of the Gospel, to stain the pride of all human glory. Every part of this wonderful scheme, in its origin, in its progress, in its consummation, tends to exalt God—and to lay man in the dust! We cannot turn to a page of the Gospel record, without finding something of this character. Do we glory in the dignity or strength of our natural powers, in our acquisitions, or in our enjoyments? The Gospel teaches us that we have nothing but what we have received, and that it is God alone who causeth us to differ. Do we think favorably of our moral dispositions, or secretly flatter ourselves with our virtues? The Gospel declares that we are, by nature, children of wrath and disobedience, having no power to please God; because, with all our good qualities, we possess nothing in our unrenewed state which he dignifies with the name of virtue. Do we think ourselves safe because the Word of life is preached to us—or because we hear the voice of our Redeemer calling to us to come unto him and be saved? Our Lord confounds this self-deluding imagination, with all the vain hopes attached to it, by declaring, as in the words before



us: "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."

But will not many object to this declaration? Will they not say, "If we cannot come to Christ, how are we to blame for not coming? And if we can come, what need of being drawn by the Father? Are not these things strange and contradictory?" Strange and contradictory as they may seem, the Divine Teacher will not take back his words, nor soften their import. He lays down his doctrine with great clearness and strength: He speaks with the authority of one who came forth from God, and who is God himself. Whatever may be our opinions or our feelings, his Word will stand in broad and legible characters when the fire, which consumes all things, shall have dissolved this earth and these heavens. It is in vain to contend against what is written; the rock will not be removed out of its place for us. But though we may not contend, we may lawfully inquire; and sure I am, the more diligent and humble our inquiry, the more cheerfully shall we subscribe to what God has revealed.

In attending to the words before us, I propose, in the *First* place, briefly to consider what it is to come to Christ.

*Second.* To notice our Lord's assertion, that no man can come to him unless drawn by the Father.

*First.* What is it to come to Christ? This is a question of great practical importance, and requires often to be discussed. To come to Christ, is but another expression for believing on Christ, and is so expounded by our Lord in the chapter before us. After stating to the Jews that he was the true bread, which came down from heaven, and which giveth light to the world, he says: "He that *cometh to me* shall never hunger, and he that *believeth on me* shall never thirst;" as if coming to him, and believing on him, were one and the same thing. And again:

“All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me; and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out; and this is the Father’s will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” Which he explains by what follows: “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and *believeth* on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” He that *comes to* Christ, and he that *believes on* Christ, performs one and the same act, and is entitled to the same promise, the promise of eternal life.

A like use of these terms is found in the following chapter: “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, “If any man thirst, let him *come unto me* and drink;” and immediately subjoins, “He that *believeth* on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;” alluding to the Spirit which they who believe on him should receive.

But what is it to believe on Christ? It implies,

1st. That we credit the Divine record concerning him; that he is very God as well as very man; that in this mysterious union, he sustains the office of Mediator, and has performed a glorious work of obedience and suffering, by which he hath expiated sin and brought in everlasting righteousness, so that God can extend pardon to the penitent and believing, without derogating from the honor of his government, and in a way which both glorifies his attributes, and secures and illustrates the rights of his throne; that as Mediator, Christ is now exalted to the right hand of his Father, and sways the sceptre of universal dominion; while as an omnipotent Saviour, he proclaims to all, through the medium of the Gospel, that whosoever will may come to him, and that he that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.

This is the record which God has given of his Son. But it is one thing to believe it, as we believe any other doctrine or fact, upon creditable testimony ; and another, to believe it with the *heart*, or with corresponding dispositions : which leads me to remark,

2d. That to constitute true faith in the Saviour, there must be a cordial approbation of this record. *It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness* ; and hence, true faith is described as an active moral principle which works by love, and gives us the victory over the world. The devils believe and tremble, but they have no love. They are compelled to yield assent to the truths of the Gospel, but they have no approbation of these truths. Their hearts are constantly and powerfully set against them. So it may be with unrenewed men ; their reason and judgment may be gained, while their hearts, with all their strength, stand opposed to the Redeemer. If this were not the case, why do many, who have no speculative doubts of the truths of the Gospel, so utterly disregard them ? And why is it that faith is represented as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and one of the evidences of a renewed heart ? But we need not urge :—There is no truth better established, than that faith is a principle to be referred to our moral as well as to our intellectual powers, and is a joint exercise of the understanding and the heart. They who believe in Jesus, so as to receive him, and become united to him, must, of necessity, approve both of his character and work. But

3d. To complete our idea of faith in the Saviour, there must be a cheerful reliance upon him for pardon and eternal life. This naturally flows from assenting to the truth of the Divine testimony concerning him, and from an approbation of that testimony. Before faith is imparted, we are strangely inclined to rest upon something we have done, or can do, as the ground of our acceptance with God : and nothing is more difficult than to

remove our self-righteous hopes. But when we are brought firmly to believe in the divinity of our Lord, and steadily to regard his great work of obedience and suffering, as that which lays a foundation for God to be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth ; when we are not only persuaded of the truth of this method of justification, but in our hearts approve of it, as calculated to exalt God and to abase the sinner, we cannot but renounce our own righteousness, and cleave to that of Christ alone. The language of our hearts will be, " Lord, I will make mention of thy righteousness, and of thine only." On this I cast all my hopes for pardon and acceptance. To this I trust as my covering for guilt, my refuge from thy wrath, and my title to eternal life. This is faith in Christ, or, in the language of the text, coming to him. But the assertion of our Lord, and which we are next to consider, is,

*Second.* That no man can thus come to him, unless drawn by the Father. By the drawing of the Father, is intended that work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, which is not only necessary to bring the sinner to Christ, but which never fails of this effect. It is a sovereign operation, issuing in a new and holy nature, and which secures the subjection of the soul to the Redeemer.

This sentiment is supported not only by the tenor of our Lord's reasoning in this place, but by two circumstances which are particularly worthy of notice. The first is, that they who are *drawn* by the Father, and they who *hear* and *learn* of the Father, are one and the same class of persons ; while it is distinctly asserted, that *every one* that heareth and learneth of the Father cometh unto him. The second is, that this agency of the Father is, in every instance, connected with a joyful resurrection. " No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me *draw him* ; and I will raise him up at the last day ;" implying that all who shall be thus drawn will not only

come to Christ, but constitute a part of that mystical body, which shall never be separated from him as its head, but raised up in honor and glory at his second coming.

Let it not be supposed, however, that any constraint is put upon the faculties of those who are thus efficaciously drawn to the Saviour. The whole effect of this operation consists, not in causing them to act against their will, but in making them willing; agreeably to a promise given to the Messiah, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

But the principal point before us is, That no man can come to Christ, unless he be drawn by the Father. An *impediment* is here supposed, and declared, to be universal. Men may differ as to the nature of this impediment, and the cause to which it is to be ascribed. They may consider it either as a misfortune, or as a crime; but they cannot differ as to the *fact*, if they credit the testimony of the Lord Jesus. *No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.* Nothing in the circumstances, and nothing in the nature of the case, limits the assertion to one class of men more than to another. It was true of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were full of their own righteousness, and who could not come to Christ while they felt no need of him, and while they disliked both his character and doctrine. It was true of the Sadducees, that philosophical and reasoning sect, whose sceptical hearts and voluptuous lives rendered them the decided enemies of all true religion. It was true of the common people, who avowed their friendship to Jesus as a prophet and teacher come from God, and who, from sinister and earthly motives, followed him in the wilderness for days and nights together. It was true of that whole generation, however distinguished or denominated. Not one of them could come to Christ without being drawn by the Father. The same is the

case still. Men cannot come to the Saviour without the special interposition of Divine power. This is just as certain, as that all men are, by nature, in a state of total alienation from God; and that faith is the work, or *fruit*, of the Holy Spirit.

But why *cannot* men come to Christ?

It is not, we remark in the first place, for the want of *opportunity*. We speak of those who enjoy the light of the Gospel, and to whom Christ is made known. As to the heathen, who have never heard of his precious name, the case is different. Whatever difficulties of a moral kind they may labor under, they cannot come to Christ for want of opportunity. But all who sit under the sound of the Gospel, may come if they will; a thousand and a thousand times have they been invited and commanded to come, and receive the gift of eternal life.

Nor, in the next place, is it the want of *natural powers*: By which I mean those powers and faculties which belong to them as men, and which are necessary to constitute them moral agents, or free and accountable beings—such as an *understanding*, to perceive the difference between right and wrong, and a *will*, to determine their own actions in the view of motives.\* Destroy either of these faculties, and they would no longer be accountable, nor their actions subject to any moral regulation. Without *understanding*, they would hold no higher place in the scale of being than the birds of the air and the beasts of the field; and without *will*, or the faculty of determining their own actions, they would be incapable of freedom, and bound by no law. We want no proof of this statement; the bare mention of the case is sufficient.

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\* *Understanding*, and *will*, are here taken in a large and popular sense, and designed to include both the intellectual and active powers of the mind, as perception, reason, memory, conscience, volition and affection.

The true reason, then, why men cannot come to Christ, is not the want of opportunity; nor yet a deficiency in their natural powers; but altogether because they are destitute of right moral dispositions, or of a good heart. This is the only difficulty in the way of their salvation; and yet this is so deep and radical, that, without Divine interposition, it will never be removed.

I have three reasons for saying, that the whole of a man's inability to come to Christ consists in the want of a heart.

The first is, That if it consisted in any thing else, God would not command him to come; for, in the whole compass of the Divine commands, not an instance can be found, where God has required a creature to perform a natural impossibility; that is, a thing for which he has no natural faculties, or none which are adequate to the thing required. God often, indeed, requires men to do things which they have no heart to do; but he never did, and never will, require them to do things which they could not do, if they had a heart. Christ's saying to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," is no exception to this remark. He said to Lazarus, while in his grave, "*come forth*"—and who can doubt that a power went with his word, which, if not prior to, was at least co-existent with obligation? We wish this great and important principle of the Divine government to be kept in view, that more is never required than there is natural power to perform—because, on the one hand, it demonstrates that God is a reasonable Being, and suits his commands to the natural capacities of his creatures; and, on the other, that all disobedience is an unreasonable violation of a most righteous law.

But another reason we have for saying that a man has no other inability to come to Christ but his want of a heart, is, that Christ himself has placed the difficulty

here, and here alone. Thus, when he saw how pertinaciously the Scribes and Pharisees rejected his doctrine and ministry, he said, "Ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life!" And again, when he wept over Jerusalem, that incorrigible city, and charged her with shedding the blood of the prophets, he said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not.*" Their own unwillingness to become his disciples was the only reason which Christ assigned for their rejecting him: and hence, the justice of the awful sentence which he pronounced, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

Our third reason, for saying, that a man has no other ability to come to Christ but what consists in the want of a heart, is, the obvious fact, that if he had a heart nothing could prevent his coming for a single moment. The great work of his salvation would instantly be performed by believing on Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world. This is so certain, that it is out of our power to conceive of any difficulty remaining where the heart is once gained. It will be understood, that we speak of those who live under the light of the Gospel, and who have had their duty on this subject faithfully expounded. Besides, if it were not so, how would the drawing of the Father, which consists in giving a right temper, remove the impediment? How could men come if they were drawn, unless being made willing to come on God's terms was all that was requisite to make their coming certain?

But here a question presents itself. Why is it said, that we *cannot* come to Christ, if, after all, the whole truth is, *we have no heart to come*; or, which is the same thing, that no other impediment lies in the way, but what consists in the want of a heart? The question is important, and the answer plain. The Scriptures often speak of our



being *unable* to do a thing, when all that is intended is, that we are utterly disinclined to do it—so disinclined, that it is certain we shall not do it while this disinclination remains. Thus it was said of Joseph's brethren, that they *could not* speak peaceably to him. Not that they had not as much *natural* or *physical* power to speak peaceably as contentiously, if they had been so disposed; but, being destitute of brotherly affection, and under the reigning power of envy and malice, it was incompatible with their state of mind to speak peaceably to their brother. Their cruel and reproachful language followed as naturally and certainly from their envy and malignity, as any effect from its cause. Yet every one can see, that they labored under no other inability but what consisted in the perverseness and wickedness of their hearts.

The Scriptures abound with similar examples. They speak of some, whose ears were uncircumcised, and *who could not hearken*; of some, who, when they had committed abomination, were not at all ashamed, *neither could they blush*; of those who have eyes full of adultery, and *cannot* cease from sin. They declare, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and that he *cannot know* them, because they are spiritually discerned;—that the carnal mind is at enmity with God, is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*; and that they that are in the flesh, *cannot please God*.

All this is agreeable to language in common use. We often say, that we cannot do a thing, when all we mean is, that we are without all inclination, or utterly averse to it. Of one man we say, that he cannot govern his temper; of another, that he cannot govern his tongue; of a third, that he cannot refrain from his companions or his cups; and, we are in no danger of being misunderstood, when we make use of these expressions. Everybody knows that we mean to speak of an inability, which consists in the want of right dispositions—not in the

want of natural powers; of an inability which does not in the least excuse the subject of it, but which forms the very essence of his sin. In like manner we are to understand the Scriptures, when they speak of the sinner's inability to come to Christ. They adopt a style agreeable to common usage, and mean no more than that sinners are so deeply alienated from Christ—so utterly disinclined to his service—that they never will come to him while in this state of mind; and that this state of mind will continue until it is removed by Divine power.

There is no need of any abstruse reasoning on this subject. You will conceive of the matter justly, if you consider that sinners cannot come to Christ, for the same reason precisely, that they cannot do anything else while their hearts are altogether opposed to it. There is a law for mind as well as matter; and it would be as absurd to suppose that a man could freely do a thing which he had no mind to do, as to go north and south at the same instant. Nor does it make any difference as to the principle, whether this want of mind be stated or occasional; for no man can choose to act against his present choice, unless he could choose to do a thing and not do it at the same time, which would be a contradiction.

As to the case before us, it is admitted and maintained that sinners have a strong and settled aversion to their duty, and that they will never come to the Saviour until this aversion be subdued by the sovereign grace of God. Still there is nothing in the way, but that stubborn and rebellious heart, whose language is, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

But I hear it asked, does this accord with experience? Do not sinners often feel a willingness to come to Christ, and think they would give worlds to come, if they had them, and after all, find that they *cannot come*, without power received from above? There is not the least doubt that this is often their impression. But what is

the true state of the case ? Are they willing to *come* in the *manner*, and for the *purposes* which God has required ? The testimony of our Lord is directly against them. He said to sinners, " Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." And again : " How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not*." And at the great and last day, he tells us he will give commandment concerning all those who shall have finally rejected the Gospel. " Bring hither these, mine enemies, that *would not* that I should reign over them, and slay them before me."

The fact is, that awakened sinners, who have a knowledge of the Gospel, very often desire to come to Christ, as a deliverer from the wrath of God ; but they wholly mistake their own case, if they suppose that they are willing and desirous to come to him as a holy Saviour, who is the friend of God as well as the friend of man, and whose design is to save his people from their sins, and not in their sins ; and to save them in subserviency to the Divine honor and glory. In this view of his character, " There is no form nor comeliness in him, nor any beauty why they should desire him." They have not a particle of that holy love which is essential to the act of closing with Christ upon the terms of the Gospel. The whole of their desires amounts to nothing more than a desire to be saved, come what will of God's honor, and the interests of his everlasting kingdom. Be their own apprehensions, therefore, what they may, we are authorized in saying that they have no heart to come to Christ ; and that, in the *want of a heart*, lies all their hindrance to this duty. At the same time, we consider it important to keep to the language of our blessed Lord, and to say that no man *can come* to him, without being drawn by the Father. This is a language well fitted to express both the guilty and helpless state of the sinner, and

seems plainly designed to prostrate his self-righteous hopes, and to lead him to the power and grace of God as his only remedy. If men abuse this language to exculpate themselves, they do it at their peril ; it is sufficiently plain to guide the sincere and humble inquirer ; and more God has not promised, nor is more to be expected or desired. We conclude this discourse with some application. From what has been said, we infer, in the

1st place, that the common excuse of sinners, that they are unable to come to Christ, or to comply with the terms of the Gospel, is utterly without foundation, and will not avail them at the bar of God. If they could not come to the Saviour for the want of opportunity, or because they are destitute of natural powers, the plea of inability might well be urged ; an impediment would then exist, which could not be consistent with guilt or blame. But since the fact is otherwise, since the whole of their inability lies in the want of a right heart ; or, which is the same thing, in their opposition to the terms of the Gospel, all heaven will acknowledge the justice of that sentence which consigns them to eternal pains for their *unbelief*. For, reflect a moment : If I cannot come to Christ, because I do not love Christ ; if I cannot come to Christ, because my heart is, in every view, opposed to him ; this is surely so far from affording me any justification, that it is the very foundation of my guilt ; and the greater my inability the greater my crime, because it manifests a more deep and inveterate opposition to the Son of God.

A rebellious son has left his father's house, and, upon a proposal of reconciliation, finds it difficult to return ; and his difficulty arises wholly from his disaffection to his father's character and government, both of which are excellent. He is urged and entreated, and every motive set before him which is calculated to operate upon a rea-

sonable and ingenuous mind. His disaffection, however, is so deeply and strongly rooted, that all persuasion is vain ; he had rather die in poverty and disgrace, an alien from his father's heart, than to return, and take the place of an affectionate and dutiful son. In this state of feeling, his return is impossible ; but is there a person in the world who would attempt to excuse him, by saying he could not help it ?

The principle is the same in the case of the sinner. His rebellion against God is, in every circumstance of it, unreasonable ; his refusal to return to God, through Christ, at the call of the Gospel, is the most unreasonable and unjustifiable rebellion of all. And shall his obstinacy in sin be made an excuse for sin ? Shall his ingratitude to the Saviour be pleaded as an apology for rejecting him ? Nothing can be more *irrational*. As well might the drunkard or the thief allege the strength of their evil dispositions as a justification of their crimes ; for their inability to a correct and virtuous course arises wholly from the prevalence of evil propensities, or from the want of good ones.

We know it is often said, that this is not a parallel case—that persons charged with these outbreking sins, could refrain from them if they would—that there is no natural necessity which compels them to intemperance or dishonesty. But is there any natural necessity which compels the sinner to a course of impenitence and unbelief ? Could he not repent and believe the Gospel if he had a heart so to do ? Did ever a man make the attempt with a willing heart, and fail ? Is not the whole difficulty plainly the want of such a heart ? “But the thief and the drunkard may refrain from their evil courses without that thorough change of disposition, which is necessary to salvation.” Be it so :—This only shows, that their propensities to their particular crimes are not so strong and settled as the sinner's aversion to repent

and believe the Gospel. It does not show, that their propensities may not, with equal propriety, be pleaded as their excuse, and that the greater their propensities the less their sin.

The only reason why persons perplex themselves on this subject is, they do not make a distinction in their minds between a *natural* and *moral* inability—that is, between an *inability* which arises from the want of natural powers, and *one* which arises solely from the want of right moral dispositions. The first *always* excuses from obligation; the last, *never*. And let no one say, this is a distinction frivolous in itself, or hard to be understood. It is a distinction founded in the reason and nature of things, and is as plain and undeniable as the distinction between day and night. There is not a man on earth who does not make it every day of his life, if the question of duty or obligation so often occur. None of us are so bereft of reason as to blame a child for not exercising the strength of a man; or a man, because he cannot stop the sun in his course, or blot out the stars. And yet, there are none of us who would not blame a refractory and disobedient child, however obstinate or unyielding his temper; nor should we hesitate to condemn, with unabating severity, a malicious and revengeful person, though his malice and revenge had become uniform and settled principles of action.

The truth is, that where our own personal conduct is not involved, we always go upon the principle, that the want of natural or physical strength is no crime; and the want of a good disposition, or the prevalence of a bad one, no excuse. But charge home upon a man the sin of impenitence and unbelief, and how soon will you hear—"I have no heart to these duties, nor can I have, till God shall give me a new heart." If you answer, "This is your sin—your evil heart of impenitence and unbelief is the very thing which condemns you; it is

against this that all the threatenings of the Gospel are leveled"—what will be his reply? "Why, I did not make my own heart. It came into the world with me, as the fruit of the original apostacy, and how can I help it. Let it be regarded as my misfortune, not as my crime. If there be any fault in it, it must be placed to the account of our first parents, who, by one transgression, involved their posterity in the same mighty ruin with themselves." But if men are not to blame for their *hearts*, what are they to blame for? They cannot surely be to blame for expressing what is in their hearts; for, by the supposition, there is nothing blameworthy there; and to attach blame to actions, which are merely external, unconnected with the state and disposition of the mind, would be as irrational as to attach it to the blowing of the wind, or the motion of a clock. Besides, if men are not to blame for their hearts, how shall the justice of God stand vindicated in their future condemnation? His word is "He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." Nay, he has declared all unbelievers in a state of condemnation already, "because they believe not on the name of the only begotten Son of God." He has threatened to punish with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, all who do not finally believe and obey the Gospel. But is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? Dare we load his sacred name with this shocking imputation? And yet, there is no other alternative, if we deny that sinners justly deserve eternal condemnation for their unbelief.

We do not wish to have it concealed, that man is a dependent being, and that such is his sinful state by nature that he will neither repent nor believe without the interposition of almighty grace. Yet, so far is this from pleading his excuse, that it only demonstrates the

depth of his depravity, and shows it to be capable of resisting everything but Divine power. We infer,

2d, That since the sinner's inability to come to Christ is wholly of a *moral nature*, and, therefore, inexcusable, there is no impropriety in exhorting him to this duty, notwithstanding his inability.

It is often said, that there is a great inconsistency in exhorting sinners to come to Christ, and admitting, at the same time, that they cannot come without the special grace of God. An inconsistency there would be, if they could not come for the same reason that they cannot make a world, or for the want of *natural* powers; for, on this supposition, all obligation would cease. But, as there is no other impediment except the want of a heart, they are most justly and fitly required to come, and bound by all the weight of the Divine authority and of their own everlasting interest to obey. This will appear plain if we advert a moment to the true foundation of obligation. What is it which binds a man to a particular action? It is not that he *once* had, or *now* has, a disposition to perform it; but the fitness of the action itself, with whatever gives it interest or importance, and its falling within the compass of his *natural* powers. These things being supposed, his obligation is complete. No matter whether his disposition be for or against it; this is a circumstance never to be brought into the account, as having any influence upon the question of obligation. But suppose it were otherwise; suppose that the want of disposition would diminish our obligation, to what degree would it diminish it? To the same degree, no doubt, in which this want should be found; and of course, where a disposition is wholly wanting, there all obligation is canceled. But who does not see that this is to make our dispositions the measure of our duty, and to overturn all law and government at once, by



licensing every man to act according to his own inclination? On this supposition there never has been, and never can be, any sin in the universe. Every moral agent will obey the law under which he is made as long as he has a disposition to obey, and the moment he ceases to have a disposition he ceases to be bound; the law under which he is placed is no longer a law to him, and there being no law, there can be no transgression.

We push the principle into these absurd consequences to show that the state of the heart can have no influence in determining the law of duty. Duty arises out of other circumstances—out of our natural powers, interests and relations—and will remain what it is whether the heart concur with or oppose its demands. Sinners, therefore, may justly be exhorted to come to Christ, notwithstanding their utter aversion to this duty, because their aversion makes no difference as to the nature of the duty itself, nor as to the force with which it binds them. They are just as much bound to come to the Saviour, and to perform all that the Gospel requires, as if they possessed a ready and willing mind; and though it is known beforehand that they will not yield to the Gospel call unless moved to it by the sovereign power and grace of God, still this alters not the fact that it is their duty to yield, nor the propriety of urging them to this duty. Why then should not the whole truth be told? Why should we not proclaim in their ears that they are under the most sacred obligations to come to Christ that they may be saved, and yet that their depravity is such that they never will come and never can come without the special grace of God?\*

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\* It is well known that different sentiments are advanced upon the subject of moral obligation.

*First.* Some suppose that we are bound to yield obedience both to the law and to the Gospel, because man, in his original state, had a *moral* or *spiritual* power to obey his Creator in all things, and because this power was lost to him through

This was the way in which our Lord himself treated the subject. He exhorted sinners, *of all descriptions*, to come to him that they might have life, and assured them that they would certainly and eternally perish, unless they obeyed his call. At the same time he did not scruple to say, "No man can come unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." He condemned the Pharisees for their hardened unbelief, and yet he said, "How *can ye believe*, who receive honor one of another? And why

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his own fault, or by the fall. The maxim commonly repeated on this topic is, that God has not lost his right to command, though man has lost his power to obey. We cannot adopt this sentiment—

1st. Because it goes upon the principle, that man's having a heart to obey God in his original state was essential to his moral agency, and that he would not, and could not, be bound to obey God without this. Of course, it was a very wicked thing for man to disobey God when he had a good heart; but would have been no sin at all, if his heart had not been good.

Besides the absurdity involved in this principle, it is difficult to see how sin could exist, if man's obligation to be holy depended on his being holy, since the obligation and the foundation of it must needs run parallel with each other. And

2d. Though the Scriptures in various ways recognize the fact, that man was made upright, they nowhere ground his obligation to the Divine law upon his *primitive rectitude*, but upon the reasonableness and equity of the Divine law itself—upon God's supremacy and transcendent excellence—upon the favors he has conferred upon man, and upon what man has yet to hope or fear from him. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is. Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked; for the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords—a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow. He is thy praise, and he is thy God." Deut. x. 12, 13, 14, 16, &c.

3d. On this subject it is evident that the voice of *conscience* accords with the testimony of Scripture. No man condemns himself, when he has broken the Divine law, upon the principle that his progenitor, six thousand years ago, had a disposition to obey God, but lost it. This is a consideration too remote to strike the eye of conscience. Conscience points him to the law itself as holy, just and good, and pronounces the verdict, *GUILTY*, on the ground that he has done that which he knew ought not to be done, and which he was bound by many weighty

do ye not understand my speech? Even because *ye cannot receive my word.*"

The same mode of presenting this subject is observable in the prophets. Ezekiel says to the rebellious house of Israel, "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" At the same time he intimates that they would certainly continue in their guilty course till God should undertake for them and renovate them by his power. This is implied in the promise, which he delivers in God's name: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon

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considerations to avoid—considerations distinct from his own moral state, or the moral state of Adam before he fell. Conscience has no occasion to travel back to years beyond the flood, to find a solid reason for self-condemnation and reproach. It has only to measure our actions by the law of duty expressed in the Word of God, or written on the table of the heart. Certainly, it must be thus with the consciences of the heathen, who know nothing of the primitive state of man, and yet whose thoughts the meanwhile accuse or excuse one another.

*Second.* Others suppose that men are bound to obey the Gospel, because God has given them grace whereby their depravity is so far counteracted, "that the conditions of salvation become possible, and may, therefore, most justly be required." But if grace be the ground of obligation, it is no more grace but *debt*; it is that which *must* be imparted to make it just in God to require obedience from the sinner. Besides, if the sinner, in consequence of his depravity, owe nothing to God—as must be admitted, if depravity destroy obligation—his depravity becomes no depravity, he must, therefore, be guiltless. God has nothing to demand of him, and has nothing to render to God. Being innocent in the sight of his judge, what need of a Saviour, or of grace through him?

*Third.* There are those, again, who found obligation, not upon what man once was, antecedent to the fall, nor upon what he is now supposed to be, in consequence of grace received, but upon the promise that he shall receive grace if he carefully attend to the use of means. This, equally with the two former schemes, supposes that *depravity* excuses from *obligation*. For if no grace be received, and none promised, *man*, according to this opinion, is not bound; and why is he not bound, but because his depravity is supposed to render obedience impracticable, and therefore not obligatory.

This opinion also supposes a promise made to the actions of unconverted men nowhere to be found in the Scriptures; that is, that God has engaged to grant converting grace upon the diligent endeavors of persons who are yet in the flesh, and who, he has expressly assured us, are incapable of pleasing him. This topic is resumed in a subsequent part of the sermon.

you and you shall be clean : a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh ; and I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments to do them."

There is no danger in following these examples in presenting Divine truth to mankind. He who was truth itself could not err, and they who spake by his Spirit must have spoken according to his will.

3d. If the sinner's inability to come to Christ be wholly of a moral nature, then it is fit not only to exhort him to *come* to Christ, but to come without delay. This is his next or immediate duty ; he cannot neglect it another moment, without violating a solemn command, and incurring enormous guilt. The reason of this is not difficult to perceive. There is nothing in the way of his coming to the Saviour but a depraved heart ; and as this can have no effect in releasing him from obligation, the command to believe reaches him at once, and his obligation is full and perfect, notwithstanding his depravity. He is bound to come to Christ *immediately*, for the same reason that he is bound to come at all.

Plain as this deduction seems, many are not aware of it, but treat the subject as if the sinner's obligation to *repent* and *believe* rested on a promise of spiritual strength to be received in consequence of attending to certain means. That is, they suppose that he is not bound to repent and believe the Gospel *now*, but only to use means that he may hereafter *repent* and *believe*. But why not repent and believe *now* ? No other reason can be given, but that the state of the sinner's heart is incompatible with these duties. Are these duties therefore to be suspended for the time being, and something else placed in their stead ? This is a doctrine very agreeable to the sinner's heart—because it admits that he is

not bound to perform any duty in a spiritual manner while unrenewed. This is what he loves to hear when disturbed by the spirituality of the Divine law, or when urged to an immediate compliance with the demands of the Gospel. It shifts from his conscience a heavy weight of obligation, and leads him to hope that through his own unsanctified endeavors he shall, sooner or later, obtain the gift of the Spirit and the promise of eternal life. It is, in effect, saying to him, Since you cannot *repent* and *believe*, you must do as well as you *can*; since you cannot love God, you must *endeavor* to love him; since you cannot give him your heart, you must keep up a fair exterior in the use of means, and eventually he will bestow his grace upon you. How shocked should we be to hear this language from the great God himself; because we should instantly perceive, not merely relaxation, but an absolute abandonment of his law, the first and great commandment of which is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might? What a justification would it be of the sinner's rebellion against God, by admitting that he is not bound to render to him the sincere and unequivocal homage of his heart? But no such language ever proceeded from Jehovah; and, with reverence be it spoken, no such language ever can proceed from him without renouncing his government over the world. All his commands are spiritual, and have an immediate respect to the heart. Nothing is done which he *approves*, or which he makes the condition of his favor, but what flows from right affections, and is of the nature of true holiness, or real conformity to his law. What then is to become of the sinner who has no heart to repent and believe—who is without *spiritual* strength, and without a promise that he shall receive strength, on the condition of anything which he will ever perform in the unrenewed state? The answer is not difficult. He will

inevitably perish, if Almighty grace do not interpose. He is in God's hands, as the clay is in the hands of the potter, and it depends on his sovereign will, whether he shall be drawn to the Saviour by the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit, or left to reject Christ, and to bring upon himself a just and aggravated punishment.

But in this perilous condition, are there no advices or counsels to be given? None, I answer, which shall be a compromise between Jehovah and the sinner—none, which shall lower the standard of the Divine commands to the level of the carnal mind—and which shall imply a promise, that if the sinner continue to attend upon the means of grace with such a heart as he has, God will, in the end, become propitious, and grant him the renewing operations of his Spirit. We find nothing which approaches to this in the preaching of Jesus Christ, or of his apostles. They laid before men their duty and the motives which urged their compliance; they expounded, reasoned, exhorted and entreated; and if sinners would not hear, they left it upon their consciences, that their guilt would be aggravated in proportion to the light and advantages they enjoyed. They did not conceal that men are dependent for right affections on the influence of the Holy Spirit; they ascribed to him every good thought and desire. But they did not, therefore, put their hearers upon a course of heartless obedience, with the promise, that their successive endeavors should be rewarded with new strength, until they should be enabled to serve God with sincerity. They directed to such things, only, as implied the exercise of a right temper, and which connected with them the promise of eternal life.

Would we tread in their steps, we must call upon the sinner to *pause*, and reflect upon the criminal and dangerous course he is in—to open his eyes to his real character, as a wanton and presumptuous rebel against God

—to search the Scriptures, and receive instruction wherever it may be found, watching daily at wisdom's gates, and waiting at the posts of her doors. We must direct him to cry after knowledge, and to lift up his voice for understanding—to worship God both in secret and in public—and earnestly to importune the gift of the Holy Spirit with all the blessings of life and salvation. But we have no authority for saying that he may perform these duties with an impenitent and unbelieving heart, or that God will accept him if he does.

All this, it may be said, brings him no relief, for his great difficulty is, that he has no heart to perform any duty in a spiritual manner. Why is he not told *how* to get a heart? In what page of the sacred volume shall we look to find such a direction? The Scripture requires the sinner to possess a right heart—but does not prescribe a course of means by which it is to be obtained; nor could such a course be prescribed without yielding to him an important point by admitting that he is not bound immediately to repent and believe the Gospel. Should this be thought discouraging, whom, let me ask, will it discourage? None but those who either want an excuse for doing nothing, and perhaps are altogether idle, or those who are secretly trusting to a round of unholy duties, as the means of obtaining the Divine favor. The *former* read their condemnation in the character and fate of the slothful servant, who hid his Lord's money, on the principle that he served a hard master, and that it was impossible to please him. The *latter* are compassing themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, and the sooner they are discouraged with their labors the better. It is time for them to see how the matter stands between them and God—that they are utterly polluted and helpless, and that if sovereign grace do not interpose to slay the enmity of their hearts, they will not only persevere in their opposition to Jehovah

till they die, but remain his enemies through eternity.

Have we, then, no more hope of the salvation of those who attend upon the means which God uses with sinners, than of those who neglect them? Certainly we have; but this hope does not arise, in any degree, from their approximating to holiness, nor from a promise made to the performances of unsanctified men—but from what occurs in the course of Divine providence, and from the natural presumption that God will smile upon his own institutions. There is more hope for a man under Gospel light, than for one sitting in pagan darkness—for one well instructed in evangelical truth, than for one in a state of ignorance—for him who is moral, than for him who is debauched—for him who statedly attends upon the institutions of religion, than for him who neglects them—for him who is awakened to a lively sense of his lost and guilty state by nature, than for him who, notwithstanding the most faithful admonitions, slumbers in security.

This hope may, and ought to be, a motive with men, to avoid those things which threaten their eternal interests, and to pursue those which increase the probability of their salvation. Nor can we perceive any evil in presenting this hope, provided nothing be said to weaken a sense of obligation to an immediate compliance with the terms of the Gospel, or which shall exhibit a stronger connection than the Word or providence of God will justify, between the circumstances of the sinner and the salvation of his soul.

4th. If none come to Christ but those who are drawn by the Father—and all come who are thus drawn—it is manifestly the grace of God alone, which makes the difference between those who embrace and those who reject the Gospel, according as it is written, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of



God that showeth mercy." Nor is it less certain, that none will embrace the Gospel but those whom God has purposed or decreed should embrace it. Men embrace the Gospel in consequence of Divine interposition ; but if God interpose, he intended to interpose, and that from everlasting ; for he can have no new intention. The conversion of a sinner to Christ is pre-eminently his own work—"And known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world : He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will."

5th. How rich is that grace which triumphs over the opposition of the human heart, and brings the soul to the Redeemer. It was great mercy which provided a Saviour, and freely offered salvation in his name ; great mercy which continued this offer from year to year, notwithstanding the unkindness or contempt with which it was received ; but, O believer ! had mercy stopped here, thou hadst never been united to Jesus ; nor indulged the pleasing hope of seeing his face, and of rejoicing in his presence forever. That hardened heart which so long resisted his calls would still have resisted. It was the secret energy of the Holy Spirit which enlightened thy darkness, subdued thine enmity, and made thee a willing captive to Him who had previously bought thee with his blood. He loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore, by his loving kindness has he drawn thee. O let not this love, this discriminating love, be forgotten ; live for him who died for thee ; for him, who, of his own self-moving goodness, has transfused his blessed spirit into thy bosom, and made thee heir of that glory which shall never fade away.—AMEN.













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